MATERIALITY AND MEDIA: AUSTRALIAN LITERARY JOURNALS IN THE POST-DIGITAL PUBLISHING ECOLOGY

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Abstract

Literary journals have always held a shifting and uncertain place in Australian cultural life, and in recent years, technological developments have both destabilised and provided new possibilities for literary journal publishing. While literary journals have a long history of adapting to challenges, material changes in publication media brought about by the introduction of digital publishing technologies have struck deeper than ever before, and prompted questions about journals' survival and relevance. These questions have, as yet, been the subject of little academic inquiry.

This project aims to fill this gap in the knowledge of literary publishing in the 'messy', 'post-digital' publishing ecology, which is characterised by change and negotiations between media and their materialities. The research examines the role materiality plays in the literary journal field within this landscape, and asks how literary journal editors exploit the languages of different media to achieve their goals.

In responding to these questions, the research employs methodology that combines interviews with Australian literary journal editors and textual analysis, complemented by a contextual review and underpinned by a theoretical framework based on the sociology of literature. The research argues that a combination of economic, technological, and cultural factors has given rise to a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print in the literary journal field. Within this hierarchy, editors' opinions and activities, funding constraints, and changing markets position print as a site of literary and symbolic value. This hierarchy can, however, be called into question when editors' perspectives are mitigated by those of readers and writers. Here, digital and print textualities and literacies are defined by difference, rather than their capacity to communicate literary or symbolic value.

This thesis presents findings on the economics and culture of the Australian literary journal field, and the ways literary journal editors communicate through media and their materialities in the 'post-digital' publishing ecology.

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: QUT Verified Signature

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And for my parents, who gave me those opportunities in the first place.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Literary journals have always held a changing and uncertain place in Australian culture. In the new millennium, digital technology has both destabilised and provided new possibilities for literary journal publishing. From their earliest calls for a new, Australian literature in the 19th century to their contributions to the 'cultural cringe' years, and from their radical celebration of the 'New Diversity' of the 1970s and 1980s (Gelder & Salzman, 1989) to their struggles to find funding in the early 2000s, the history of literary journals is strewn with crises and rallies. Their popularity has ebbed and flowed with changes in government policy and funding availability, and with technological changes that have affected the materiality of reading and writing. Recent material changes in publication media have struck deeper than ever before, prompting questions about journals' existence and relevance in a 'post-digital' context, which Cramer describes as the 'messy' mingling of old and new media after digitisation (2015). These questions are complicated by persistent anxieties about journals' popularity, subscription rates, and relevance to contemporary Australian literature, which in turn affect their access to vital public funding.

This research investigates the role materiality plays in contemporary Australian literary journals, and how literary journal editors use different media—print and digital—to achieve their goals. Both print and digital publishing are important and useful to the literary journal field—but this thesis argues that, intermediated as it now is by digital publishing, print has assumed new symbolism as the site of traditional 'literary' value. This research project thus collects and generates data about the past, present, and future of literary journals in Australia, focusing on their relationship with digital technology and materiality. Two research questions frame this investigation into these issues at the intersection of literary value and technology: What role does materiality play in the literary journal field, and how do literary journal editors use media to achieve their goals?

These research questions, foregrounded by a contextual review, are investigated through two methods that blend data and analysis of literary journals' past, present, and future: semi-structured interviews and textual analysis. Together, these approaches permit the research questions to be examined from multiple perspectives. In the following chapters, a contextual review defines the scope and provides background on emergent issues in the

literary journal field, while semi-structured interviews examine the views and activities of literary journal editors. Textual analysis, complementing interview data, interrogates literary journal texts from new perspectives, revealing the role of materiality in terms of how it communicates value and meaning between editor, reader, and writer.

1.1 INTERROGATING MATERIALITY

The integration of digital media into the publishing field has increased emphasis on the contextual data embedded in different media, and thus provides an opportunity to reconsider the ways that meaning is created in both print and digital material. Print is no longer the only means of publication, and contextual effects such as paper choice, illustrations, and typeface, which might once have been taken for granted, can be questioned and examined anew. At the same time, perceptions of the internet and the effects of on-screen reading are open to interrogation and interpretation.

This questioning comes not only from critics of electronic literature, but from writers, editors, and readers interested in spreading literary work as widely as possible and supporting writers in their careers. This thesis argues that for literary journals and their communities, writing is not merely textual, but contextual, and a literary journal cannot be regarded in terms of its content alone: a text is not composed of disembodied words, perhaps viewed in social and theoretical context, but is an embodied being. Material factors such as paper stock, web design, and the use of colour, formulate the reader's 'horizon', along with historical factors, social factors, and cultural codes.

Due to the renewed importance of this materiality in editors' and writers' decision-making, the cultural status of the print object must necessarily be called into question. While editors typically cite goals such as giving voice to good writing, developing their audience, and contributing to Australian cultural life, what can their use of media tell us about the dialogic of value that lies hidden in materiality? While this research suggests that in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, literary journals have been reconfigured as a negotiation between aesthetics, form, temporality, materiality, and subject matter in both print and digital media, the fact remains that print has gained new symbolic significance, and could be said to dominate a 'hierarchy of media' in the Australian literary journal field.

In responding to these ideas, this thesis explores the influence of institutions, traditions, and power structures on literary journals and their editors. This approach sits within the field of the sociology of literature and examines how decisions around their use of different media

are made, and asks what factors editors consider in developing their publication strategies. The thesis also responds to questions about the idea of the 'literary'—the character or genre of writing that *literary* journals, even in their name, claim to formulate, support, and disseminate. The role of the 'literary' is examined by considering the attitudes and characteristics of a literary journal, and how the idea (or ideal) of literary value might differ in different media. While finding that digital media has broadened literary journals' scope for engagement and growth, and provided opportunities to cut costs (if *replacing* print), the most persistent theme uncovered during the project demonstrated that print, although expensive, impractical, and time-consuming, holds particular power for editors, and that this power has material foundations.

1.1.1 The changing place of Australian literary journals

The history of literary journals in Australia is strewn with crises. In 2010, it became clear that a new crisis related to materiality was emerging. A rumour had leaked to the press that the journal *Meanjin*—one of Australia's oldest and most respected—would cease print publication and be distributed online instead. The then editor of the magazine elected not to renew her contract. On social media, blogs, and in print, the literary community reacted. *The Age*'s literary critic Peter Craven vented his fury through the newspaper, writing that 'if *Meanjin* is taken online, it will cease effectively to exist … will shrivel in the online desert for the very reason that the best of what it has published down the years has had claims to permanence' (Craven, 2010).

At this time, in broad terms, the global publishing industry was successfully adjusting to the many disruptions brought about by the integration of digital media. That issues of materiality held such critical influence over this small segment of Australian independent publishing invites investigation. For Australian literary journals, existing under near-constant threat of folding due to lack of funding and readers, literary value is a heavily guarded commodity—was it fear that material changes might fatally soften their symbolic capital that produced such a vehement response to the 'threats' facing *Meanjin*?

While many literary commentators agreed that *Meanjin* should be supported, Craven's point of view was not universally shared in the Australian literary community, and debate about the role of digital publishing in the Australian literary journal field spread.[1] Many

[1] See, for example, Chris Flynn's (2010) blog on the *Kill Your Darlings* website, Ali Alizadeh's (2011) response on the *Meanland* blog, or Jeff Sparrow's (2010) words on how literary journals survive in the digital age.

literary journal editors took issue with Craven's assumptions about the permanence and value of the internet. Digital publication can reach more readers, cut costs, and guarantee a future for impoverished publications run nearly entirely on volunteer labour—many editors asked whether it mattered if a literary work were printed on paper at all.

The emergence of new production and consumption practices engendered by the use of new media technology presents the greatest challenges and opportunities literary journals have encountered since they emerged as voices for new writing in the late 19th century. While for 150 years, Australia's literary journals were tied to the rhythms, constraints, and material language of the printed form, in the contemporary age of digital reproduction, they are now also subject to the rhythms, demands, and contextual effects—and affect—of the internet and social media.

The means of distributing and reading literary journals has shifted as a consequence of the rise of digital publication methods in the 1990s, prompting new entanglements between materiality and textuality, and recasting the nature of 'the text' itself as inherently material. Where electronic mechanised printing replaced moveable type in the 1960s and 1970s, and desktop publishing replaced manual layouts in the 1980s and 1990s—and both shifts altered the production of literary journals—more recent digital technologies have changed journals at their interface with the reader, who no longer reads on paper, but on screen, mobile device, and in print. Where once journals operated on relatively fixed publication schedules dictated by printing and distribution rosters, and were available by subscription or at a limited number of bookshops and newsagents, they can now be accessed through a modern digital device connected to the internet at any time, and for as long as editors choose to make them available (and longer, if users choose to share files or save them in other locations).

The advantages of such new publication and distribution methods for literary journals are many—they are both economic and promotional, and support the frequently cited goal of developing readerships for new Australian writing. Most pieces of creative and non-fiction writing in Australian literary journals are typically limited to 2,000 words, so most can only publish about eight pieces per issue, plus poetry and shorter works. Online, space is infinite, so pieces of limitless length and number can be published. Printing and distribution costs are removed. Physical space for an archive or store of journals is no longer necessary. Circulation is virtually instantaneous, and not bound by geographical distances. A further advantage is the capacity to market a journal and its individual articles on social media and blogs, linking the journal to a network of readers who in turn are referred to the magazine to read, purchase,

or contribute. Literary journal editor Ivor Indyk wrote that 'the electronic medium suits the literary magazine more than the printed book because it allows it to reclaim its dynamic qualities as a miscellany' (Indyk, 2011). While all the miscellaneous content of a single literary journal is unlikely to appeal to every reader of a print magazine, digital publication allows individual pieces of content to reach further into a segmented audience, as Chris Anderson's 'long tail' theory suggests (C. Anderson, 2006).

When we consider that Australian literary journals nearly always operate under financial stress, many surviving on the goodwill and resources of their editorial teams and paying their contributors and administration costs with small grants from arts funding bodies, the choice to continue to produce print journals bears some investigation because of its sheer impracticality. This choice is of particular interest at a time when, as John Thompson writes, the shift to digital publishing is set to continue, straining traditional supply chains and placing immense 'downward pressure' on the cost of paper books, all the while enabling writers to connect with readers without the need for intermediaries—a process he calls 'disintermediation' (J. Thompson, 2012, p. 408). When Thompson wrote *Merchants of culture* in 2012, the shift towards electronic publishing seemed inevitable. After just four more years of calibration, however, it seems to have slowed and stabilised, forming a 'post-digital' ecology that leverages different material possibilities[2] (Mannion & Stinson, 2016). Given the economic advantages of digital publishing for both publishers and consumers, examining this phenomenon in the literary journal field can yield insights into the symbolic value embedded in the medium.

As Thorburn, Jenkins, and Seawell (2003) write in *Rethinking media change: The aesthetics of transition*, during times of technological transformation, 'the actual relations between emerging technologies and their ancestor systems proved to be more complex, often more congenial, and always less suddenly disruptive than was dreamt of in the apocalyptic philosophies that heralded their appearance' (p. 2). Many Australian literary journals continue to make use of print while maintaining websites and social media channels that complement one another. Eli Horowitz, for example, editor of US journal *McSweeney's*, sees his task as 'figuring out the confines and the possibilities offered by [each media] form and taking advantage of it to the fullest' (Horowitz, Lippy, & Allen, 2010, p. 65). Given that

[2] The term 'post-digital' is explored further in chapter three's literature review and is adopted in this thesis to describe the ongoing and definitive negotiation between old and new in the contemporary publishing sphere (Mannion & Stinson, 2016, p. viii).

Horowitz, and many other editors, see this task as important to the success of a literary journal, what are the 'confines and possibilities' offered by different media, and how can they be used to best advantage? How are print and digital media interrelated, and what can theoretical perspectives help us understand about editors' 'real-world' practices?

The nimbleness of literary journals, particularly compared with print books' long production schedules and status as individual art objects, means that literary journals bear consideration in their own right—and indeed, different trends are emerging between literary journal and literary book publishing's use of different media. Where Thompson's (2012) in-depth study focusing on global trade publishing revealed that e-publishing was contributing to significant reductions in sales of paper artefacts in the book industry, research into independent magazines suggests that periodical print industries are following a different trajectory—one that reveals a complex and intermediated relationship between print and digital texts (Hamilton, 2013; Le Masurier, 2012).

Identifying a process that Katherine Hayles (2007) calls 'intermediation', Megan Le Masurier (2012) proposes that this renewal of print is somehow related to digital technology. She writes that the 'renewal of the impulse to make magazines independently and in print' of the past two decades has been 'facilitated by the expansion of digital technologies and cultures' (Le Masurier, 2012, p. 385). User-friendly desktop publishing software and cheap printing (especially in China) mean that journals can be produced with small financial investment. At the same time, access to websites, blogs, and social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have made the processes of marketing and building communities of readers intimate, instantaneous, and immediate.

With high digital literacy among editors of independent journals for creating and selling their publications, Le Masurier (2012) asks why young people would choose to publish in print—why 'this expensive, environmentally wasteful medium … that is both less easy and more costly to distribute than online publications, one that will necessarily reach far fewer readers and at a much slower speed?' (p. 393). If most practical and economic problems associated with publishing a literary journal are best managed by choosing digital publication, questions arise about unspoken, unacknowledged discourses flowing through the literary journal field and their relationship with materiality. Analysing, questioning, and reconfiguring the literary journal field can uncover what properties of the printed medium help maintain these publications' status and symbolic value in contemporary publishing landscape.

1.1.2 Redefining the literary journal

In recent years, Australian literary periodicals have diversified their publication media—many of them 'journals' in name only. Most Australian literary journals operate in multiplatform mode, with products that include websites, blogs, downloads, and printed journals. Social media interaction now constitutes a vital means of communicating with readers, and live events have taken on new significance as an opportunity to interact with readers in 'real life'. In examining the role materiality plays in the field, it is evident that the process of working in different media creates a journal's single identity, or a 'work as assemblage', which Hayles (2005) defines as 'a cluster of related texts that quote, comment upon, amplify, and otherwise intermediate one another' (p. 105). Texts published by literary journals in different media not only co-exist, but co-evolve and inform one another through a process of intermediation, making meaning through the relationship they have to each other and to the embodied world (Hayles, 2012). This aesthetic process is something literary journal editors try to exploit in their mission to develop audiences and broadcast new writing in its most suitable medium.

Over the last several years, the number of literary journals active in Australia has hovered between 10 and 20, with most publications run by a single lead editor, or occasionally two joint editors. In 2014, when sampling for this study's interviews began, there were 17 literary journals in operation. Of these 17, eight published in multiplatform (including print and web publications), two published in print only, and seven published the web. Typical of the complexity of these publications, some 'web-only' publications, such as *Cordite*, also produce print books, while 'print-only' journals—*The Canary Press* and *Island*—still maintain robust social media presences and active websites. These examples provide further evidence for the notion that the presence of digital technology has contributed to reshaping literary journals so that, while each is made up of different components with different emphases on different media, all can be considered 'works as assemblage', clusters of texts that intermediate one another across media and forms (Hayles, 2005, p. 105).

Although questioning 'the future of publishing' gives rise to interesting debates about the fate of journals and other media with their origins in print, this thesis aims to transcend the dichotomies of 'print versus digital' debates—of new versus old, and tradition versus innovation—and instead ask questions about how digital and print publication co-exist. This co-existence can reveal insights into how different media communicate, what they symbolise, and the priorities of literary journal editors working in the field today. Questions about this

co-existence are embedded in perceptions about materiality, cultural and traditional practices, and the relationships between texts and contexts. The current co-evolution of electronic and print media in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape provides an opportunity to critically examine literary writing's relationship to print publication (which can now be regarded from a new perspective), the values of different modes of delivery for literary writing, and editors' roles in determining these values.

1.2 THESIS SUMMARY

Questions of the role materiality plays in the literary journal field, and how editors use different media to achieve their goals, are examined in the following five chapters. Chapter two presents the research project's theoretical framework based on the sociology of literature and Pierre Bourdieu's work on the literary field, and the project's methodology. The methodology section offers a reasoned argument for the chosen methods of semi-structured interviews and textual analysis, demonstrating their symbiotic relationship and necessity for responding to the research questions. It also argues for the integration of a contextual review into the research project. This contextual review demonstrates how the contemporary publishing landscape in the literary journal field was formed, and foregrounds the themes explored in interviews and textual analysis.

Chapter three's literature review presents a critical overview of the literature examining significant research in the field, focusing on studies of literary journals both from Australia and abroad, and placing emphasis on work that examines these publications' relationships with different media, as well as the role of the editor as an essential intermediary in the construction of the journal itself. This chapter identifies gaps in this research knowledge and raises questions yet to be asked or addressed, to which this project responds.

Chapter four is a contextual review, demonstrating how and why the literary journal field has arrived at its current state of play, how its values have developed, and what its history reveals about the present climate (particularly where editors' attitudes and values are concerned), foregrounding the analysis of interviews and texts in chapters five and six. Beginning with an historical overview detailing the traditions embedded in the printed form, this chapter pays specific attention to trends that have emerged alongside the rise of digital media early in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The chapter then turns to contemporary issues in the literary journal field, analysing how the field has reconfigured in response to a

convergence of economic and cultural factors that include the rise of digital publishing technologies.

Chapter five presents and examines the data from extensive semi-structured interviews with editors of Australian literary journals, interrogating their attitudes to different publishing media, the attractions of these media, and how works differ when 'translated' between media. This data is analysed, and the trends and themes that arise from analysis are discussed with reference to chapter two's theoretical framework and contextual narratives identified in chapter four. Here, a 'hierarchy of media' in the literary journal field emerges, where print is favoured, especially where it offers a symbolic counterpoint to the properties and cultures of digital publication.

Throughout chapter six, textual analysis is used to interrogate literary journals, much as literary journal editors were questioned in semi-structured interviews. This chapter examines texts published both in print and online, paying particular attention to their paratextual context, and the relationships between texts 'translated' between different media. Textual analysis reveals different perspectives, and editors' statements to be re-examined from the positions of readers and writers. In doing so, the chapter further questions the 'hierarchy of media' that arose in interview analysis, shifting focus from editors' statements about the value of print to an exploration of *how* print and digital media communicate, and their differences, rather than relative values.

A concluding chapter discusses the significance and findings of the study, and raises new questions that emerge from the project.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This thesis uses a theoretical framework drawn from cultural studies and the sociology of literature. These approaches call for a research design that explores different ways of knowing and constructing knowledge. Therefore, research questions about what role materiality plays in the literary journal field and how literary journal editors use different media to achieve their goals are explored through two qualitative research methods: interviews and textual analysis. Each method allows data to emerge about materiality in the contemporary literary journal field. These approaches to data collection and analysis entwine and complement one another, and are essential to forming a balanced and considered response to the research questions. Interview and textual analysis methods are, vitally, foregrounded by the knowledge mapped in the contextual review. This contextual review thus forms an important foundation for the project's methodology: it establishes the shape and habitus of the 'post-digital' publishing landscape that Australian literary journal editors negotiate in their decisions about media and materiality.

This research design enables different voices to emerge, and so responds to a problem that has a significant bearing on the research questions: whom do literary journals exist to serve? While editors' positions are critical to answering the research questions, many issues in the field stem from conflicts of 'ownership' over publications that are at once publicly funded, supported by private institutions, created by editors, purchased by readers, and assembled from the work of various writers. Of course, literary journals exist for a plurality of groups and stakeholders. Combining a contextual and balanced map of the field, with methods that provide an in-depth interrogation of editors' viewpoints and a broader examination of issues via the texts themselves, offers scope to fully explore how materiality is shaped by the many forces and agents at work in Australian literary journals.

In the first instance, the contextual review documents, analyses, and interprets the evolution of the literary journal field until today. This identifies gaps in the knowledge of how materiality, literary value, and economic viability might function in the contemporary literary journal field, alongside queries about the goals and approaches of editors in formulating their journals in today's publishing climate.

As new facets of the research questions come to light, research methods that generate new knowledge are called on to respond to them. Interviews and textual analysis provide opportunities to gather stories from within the contemporary field, both from literary journal editors and from literary journals themselves, and analysing this data responds to emerging questions at those critical points where technology and materiality collide. Interview data for this study yields some of the richest new knowledge for answering questions about materiality and literary journal editors' goals, but when critiqued in light of those editors' positions within the field (often precarious, dependent on funding, and wielding power over their publications, contributors, and staff), further gaps emerge. These are filled through textual analysis, which is employed as a method that mitigates both editors' natural bias and the performative nature of interviews through data gathered from the texts themselves. This data allows the research questions to be explored from readers' and writers' perspectives, and provides opportunities to test and re-examine editors' statements and positions.

Since literary journal texts exist at the interface of the publications' three essential collaborators—readers, writers, and editors—they open up opportunities for this broader understanding of the research questions, producing knowledge found in latent meanings within texts and their paratextual elements. Literary journal texts can also reveal much about the latent dynamics of the field as a whole, particularly as their own materiality and paratextuality guide interpretations and navigate technological mediation in the digital age.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Recent developments in the technology, culture, and industry of publishing have sparked renewed interest in publishing studies and the sociology of literature, led by prominent studies of the publishing industry such as John Thompson's (2012) *Merchants of culture* and Ted Striphas's (2009) *The late age of print*. This invigoration of the field has prompted it to re-emerge in an interdisciplinary vein,[3] encompassing, as in this thesis, methods, theory, and practices from a range of disciplines, including literary studies, creative writing studies, new media studies, and publishing studies. This thesis combines these research techniques into a mode of enquiry that theorist Jim Collins and has called 'literary culture studies' (De Bruyn & Collins, 2013, p. 197), and that operates at the intersection of the traditional literary sphere and the 'digital literary sphere' proposed by Simone Murray

[3] For more recent views of the sociology of literature, see the special issue of *New Literary History*, 2010, vol. 41, no. 2, particularly James English's introductory essay 'Everywhere and nowhere; The sociology of literature after "the sociology of literature"'.

(2015). This intersection of traditional and digital literary inquiry is excellently framed by the notion of the 'post-digital' publishing landscape described by Florian Cramer[4] (2015).

Answering research questions about the role materiality plays in the literary journal field, and the ways editors make decisions about media use, requires a theoretical framework that responds to how institutions, traditions, and power structures influence literary journals, ideas of what constitutes literary value and how it is communicated, and to emerging textualities in a networked, digital society. The theoretical framework for this thesis is therefore shaped by methods and theory from the sociology of literature; in particular, it adopts the vocabulary of Bourdieu's model of the literary field. It also draws some explanatory concepts from contemporary new media theory, especially the work of Katherine Hayles.

With their focus on literary journal editors as the decision-makers who shape their publications through their use of media, these theoretical approaches articulate and interpret data gathered through semi-structured interviews and textual analysis. This research design also relies on a detailed contextual review that configures and problematises the field of enquiry.

2.1.1 Bourdieu and the vocabulary of the literary field

Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural production and the literary field provides a vocabulary that will articulate the dynamics of this field, and explain how literary value is construed and communicated, and why it might be associated with the printed form—concepts that are essential to understanding the role materiality plays in the literary journal field. The appeal of Bourdieu's theory of cultural production lies in its direct evolution from the literary publishing field, and works such as *The rules of art* (Bourdieu, 1996), *The field of cultural production* (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993), and *A conservative revolution in publishing*[5] (Bourdieu, 2008) remain applicable to the contemporary publishing fields, as outlined in the following sections. The specificity of Bourdieu's work offers a model for understanding slippery notions such as literary value and autonomy much more intimately than broader theories of cultural production—for example, those delineated in Becker's *Art worlds* (2008)—would offer.

[4] Cramer (2015, pp. 19–24) describes 'post-digital' as the 'messy state of media, arts and design *after* their digitisation', where technology is no longer considered disruptive, change is the new norm, and people choose the technology 'most suitable to the job' rather than 'defaulting' to the latest 'new device'.

[5] Originally published in 1999 as 'Une révolution conservatrice dans l'édition' in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 126–127: 2–28. This thesis uses the 2008 English translation.

Arising from this specificity are a set of 'meta-concepts' such as *field*, *habitus*, *doxa*, and *autonomy* that provide a ready-made discourse of value for literary work and the culture of publishing. Bourdieu's notions of *subversion* and *consecration* also offer a useful model for understanding how change occurs in the literary field, and the way new forms and styles of writing are valued and instilled with symbolic capital. This, in turn, can provide insights into how literary journal editors are working to situate their journals today in relation to long-established practices in their field, new technologies, and their goals of promoting new writing and enriching cultural life in Australia; these insights can reveal more about the role materiality plays in the field.

The field, autonomy, and literary value

Ideas from Bourdieu that are most useful for addressing questions about the role of materiality in literary journals and the ways editors use different media to achieve their goals pertain to the construction of literary value through sociological processes within the literary field. According to Bourdieu, agents (writers, publishers, editors, readers, critics, scholars, etc.) function in the literary field, which operates as a separate social universe with its own form of capital and specific laws or rules that refract those of external politics and economy. The notion of the field is relational, and encourages the researcher to examine the way individuals and organisations function according to how others might or might not function, with all individuals acting as part of a greater whole. The field is characterised by a struggle for power achieved by gaining symbolic capital in the form of prizes and acclaim (Pierre, Bourdieu, & Johnson, 1993, pp. 162–164). Agents' behaviour within this field is governed by habitus, or—put simply—their sense for the 'rules of the game'.

In *The rules of art*, Bourdieu (1996) describes how the literary field of late 19th-century France, having no money-making appeal, was separated from the market forces. Instead of a consuming public making judgements, agents operating in the field—artists, critics, and intellectuals—gained the freedom to make their own verdicts on literary value, galvanising ideas of this value as distinct from, and defined against, popular taste. Bourdieu (1996) suggests that the field of cultural production is governed by an inverse economy that trades in symbolic capital (resources such as awards, prestige, and recognition) and cultural capital (education, style, and knowledge), rather than economic capital, and that the more a field resists the economic market, the more autonomous it becomes. More than the aesthetic ideal of 'art for art's sake' derived from Kant's *Critique of judgment*, Bourdieu's autonomy is the separation of the artistic field from the market so that it can rely on its own processes to

define literary value, thus providing some of the necessary social conditions for legitimising works of art (Boschetti, 2006, p. 149).

While the publishing industry in Australia and its small literary journal field has never operated independently of the economic market, and is in fact tied intimately to it, the explanatory power of Bourdieu's autonomy in understanding literary value remains vital. This is because autonomy can be regarded as operating on a relative scale: the less earning power a work of art possesses, the more potential it has to demonstrate literary value, and vice versa. As Australian literary journals have very limited earning potential, and mostly rely on government grants and fundraising, they are well suited to the application of Bourdieu's theory of the literary field.

Applying The rules of art *to literary journals in the digital age*

While Bourdieu's *The rules of art* takes its rubrics from the closed intellectual sphere of 19th-century France, its robust explanatory framework has proven nonetheless illuminating when contemporarily applied to the arts and sciences (and notably in Thompson's *Merchants of culture*, a recent study of the sociology of publishing). Furthermore, characteristics of the rarefied and exclusive 19th-century French publishing field are surprisingly similar to those of Australia's most 'literary' publications. For example, Australian literary journals still define themselves against popular taste—as many editors testified in interviews, Australian literary journals often focus on avant-garde, difficult, high-brow, and experimental work, and see themselves as operating separate from the consumer market, as their reliance on (and, at times, sense of entitlement to) government grants demonstrates.

While the Australian literary field might share some characteristics of Bourdieu's 19th-century publishing model, Bourdieu's emphasis that print culture provided the necessary conditions for the 'conquest' of autonomy raises questions about how new electronic media might affect his concepts. Bourdieu's theory was constructed in relation to a specific kind of reading market—an emerging, mass-consuming, 'bourgeois' reading public—and his work bears the cultural and technological markers of its time and place. While print institutions dominated the period during which the culture of Australian literary journals was established, their transformation from print quarterlies to 'assemblages of works' in different media raises the question of whether literary value can still be constructed and communicated traditionally, and according to Bourdieu's 'rules'. This study's theoretical framework thus responds to questions about the processes at work in a 'post-digital' publishing sphere.

While an autonomous position in relation to the mass market is essential for those, such as literary journal editors, trading in symbolic capital, this activity depends on a separation of consumer culture and literary culture. This separation is challenged by the online convergence of consumer culture, mass popular culture, and literary culture. In his study of how the internet and mass media popularise literary books, Collins (2010) demonstrates that the 'coterie audience' is more and more difficult to foster, particularly when a new generation of 'amateur readers' find their taste arbiters outside the academy—that is, outside the literary field's 'gatekeepers' of editors, critics, academics, and writers. This presents a challenge to the traditional symbolic economy that constructs and communicates literary value for Australian literary periodicals.

In order to explore and explain these problems that arise when Bourdieu's theories are applied to the contemporary Australian literary sphere, the contextual review traces the development of colliding literary and economic agendas in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape—a collision that prompts questions about how literary journals can demonstrate literary value while participating in the 'technoconsumerist' online market. The contextual review's excavation of the foundational processes of the contemporary field then serves to illuminate arguments editors made in their interviews as they explained their decisions around media use, and frame the data revealed through textual analysis.

2.1.2 New media theory and Katherine Hayles

However, it is not only people, or 'agents' such as writers and editors, who influence editors' decisions and contribute to the construction of literary value. New media theory deals specifically with the digitisation of mass media and information and how it affects culture and writing. Marshall McLuhan, in particular, is recognised as an important theorist of technology and its power in shaping society. McLuhan's (1964) statement that 'the medium is the message' (p. 7) was an acknowledgement of the media's power to convey meaning and influence culture, but in many ways, McLuhan's work fails to capture the complexities of a field influenced by both analogue and digital media. Likewise, Raymond Williams's approach, which argues that technologies are shaped by cultural, social, and political interests[6], also fails to capture the subtleties of mutually deterministic processes at work in the literary journal field, where culturally embedded practices are affected by the technological environment they inevitably inhabit and vice versa.

[6] See, for example, *Marxism and literature* (1977).

Contemporary theorist Katherine Hayles (2005) provides a mutually deterministic approach to technology and culture that reconciles the nature/culture divide of the McLuhan–Williams debate through its emphasis on the 'irreducible complexity of contemporary posthuman configurations' (p. 7): the correlative, co-evolution of digital subjects and literary texts. There is no denying that Hayles's work, especially her book *My mother was a computer* (2005), is a dominant voice in the theoretical ensemble of this thesis. This is because Hayles provides a foundational understanding of the aesthetics and politics of production and media, and her theoretical writings articulate the relationship between bodies, digital interfaces, and material texts that is especially suited to examining materiality in the literary journal field in Australia, and that can be applied across this project's research design.

Hayles's work in *Writing machines* (2002), and *My mother was a computer* (2005), for example, seeks to soften the binary opposition between embodiment and computational, and to deeply engage with the materiality of literary texts and adopt a nuanced view of the relationship between digital and print textuality (2005, p. 3). This divergent approach aligns with the attitude taken in this project that, drawing on the cultural studies approach, acknowledges the innate subjectivity of human experience, and the complex and rapidly evolving dynamics of literary and digital culture. As a literary theorist who incorporates close readings into her investigations of her subjects, Hayles's work is most illuminating when applied to a text. Textual analysis employs Hayles's theories to explore the nuanced relationships between digital and material texts. Reflected through fictional representations, these form a feedback loop within their own sites of publication and the field that surrounds them.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

2.2.1 Contextual review

The contextual review brings together and analyses primary and secondary literature to define the field of enquiry and establish the nature of the Australian literary journal as a field of cultural production. Between the rise of the internet in the 1990s and the present day, literary journals have reconfigured themselves in response to new technologies and new materialities; however, as yet, little research has shaped or characterised these new formations. Works now move between media, translated between digital and print, and even into 'real-life' performance contexts, so that literary journals barely fit the definition of 'journals' or 'magazines' anymore. Instead, they can be said to form 'assemblages of works',

which Hayles (2005) defines as ‘a cluster of related texts that quote, comment upon, amplify, and otherwise intermediate one another’ (p. 105). Within these ‘assemblages’, the contextual review traces the ways that intermediation takes place, and maps how editors rely on the material qualities of different media to make meaning. Editors’ choices and use of media often reflect value back into the printed form as the traditional ‘home’ of literary journals. The contextual review’s map uncovers evidence of a ‘print ecosystem’ reinforcing the value of print publication, and the emergence of an ‘affective network’ (O’Dell, 2014) anchored by the printed form, sidestepping traditional reading modes (literary versus popular) and creating a specific mode of reading that makes an ideal ‘space’ for a journal’s reception.

The contextual review establishes how and why literary journals have arrived at their contemporary state of play, tracing how the history of literary journals in Australia has contributed to their present ‘post-digital’ climate, and how literary journals’ print origins have created traditions and cultures that tie them to the print medium. To achieve this, it analyses the traditional, historical context of the journal’s relationship with media, then addresses circumstances arising from digital media’s infiltration of the publishing industry. At the same time, the contextual review uncovers emerging and established conditions that foster specific attitudes and behaviours where media and questions of ‘literariness’ collide, especially in the hands of editors.

While not a research method in itself, the foregrounding work contributed by the contextual review reveals a reconfiguration of the field in the digital age, where several themes and practices emerge favouring print’s role in a media hierarchy. The contextual review thus shapes and contextualises the data gathered and analysed from interviews and textual analysis, and calls for both methods to be used in tandem to further respond to the research questions and interrogate specific values associated with print.

2.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview’s capacity to gather data that is both in depth and individual has made it the chosen method in previous studies investigating editors’ views on publishing culture and technology. Paling and Nilan’s 2006 study employed semi-structured interviews to explore how literary journal editors adopted and used technology, and the 1979 and 1981 special editions of *Australian Literary Studies* used the method to interrogate literary journal editors’ goals, challenges, and values. Thompson used semi-structured interviews with editors and publishers as the main data collection method for his decisive

publishing industry study *Merchants of culture*. In this book, Thompson (2012) writes that as a method, the semi-structured interview 'enables you to get inside organisations and get a feel for how they work, allows you to explore issues in depth and helps you to see the world from the viewpoint of particular individuals located at particular positions within the field' (pp. 415–416).

Borrowing from cultural studies, this thesis emphasises allowing all perspectives to be voiced, and takes into account power dynamics, and the plasticity of socially-constructed knowledge. This calls for an interview technique that permits participants to respond according to their own experience. Structured interviews defer to a fixed set of questions, not unlike a verbal survey, and are firmly guided by the researcher's goals; unstructured interviews are not dissimilar to oral accounts, where participants' views and activities are central; semi-structured interviews combine elements of both. Where structured interviews and surveys are more typically used to gather quantitative data often concerned with numbers and statistics, semi-structured interviews yield data more suited to qualitative analysis, such as the thematic, explanatory textual analysis employed in this project (Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008, p. 10). In-depth, semi-structured interviews provide targeted data that has also been assembled according to participants' preoccupations. This is important to this thesis, as the researcher was positioned outside the literary journal field, with an 'academic' knowledge of the publications, but little 'real-world' experience of editors' practice. Furthermore, giving participants the power to direct conversation raised new questions and uncovered unexpected responses to existing inquiry.

This approach to semi-structured interviewing and qualitative analysis positions the researcher like the traveller in Steinar Kvale's metaphor, where the interviewer–traveller 'walks along with the local inhabitants, asks questions and encourages them to tell their own stories of their lived world. The potentialities of meanings in the original stories are differentiated and unfolded through the traveller's interpretations in the narratives he or she brings back to home audiences' (2008, p. 19).

Data gathered during interviews was used to inform and refine the research questions and shape the direction of the thesis.

Sampling

In 2014, when sampling began, there were 17 literary journals operating in Australia that fit this thesis's definition of a literary journal: a publication in web, print, or

multiplatform that identified as a literary journal and was based in Australia, and regularly published miscellaneous new writing from either Australian or overseas writers.

Journal editors invited to take part in the study were found through research undertaken during the literature review and contextual review phases of the project, which examine Australian literary journals and their relationships to the literary field in Australia. Primary sources of information for journal websites included sites such as *Austlit: The Australian literature resource*, the Australia Council for the Arts' *Literature board* website, Australian literary writers' blogs, such as Alice Grundy's (2014) review of extant magazines, and literary journals' own websites.

Editors are often time-poor, and poorly paid for their time, so difficulty in securing interviews with every editor was taken into account when formulating a sampling approach. As individual publications were also under scrutiny, it was not imperative that more than one editor of jointly managed magazines be interviewed, although it was preferable. 'Snowball' sampling was also used wherever appropriate, where editors were asked to refer or even introduce the researcher to new participants. These sampling techniques were most suited to capturing the breadth of literary journal editors' opinions and experience, as well as covering the spectrum of literary journals: old to new, conservative to radical, publishing in print only to those publishing solely on the web. With so few journals in Australia, it was decided to invite all active journals in 2014 (17 in total) to take part in the study.

Australian literary journals' websites were searched to find contact details for editors. Potential participants were sent an email introducing the project and researcher, along with a Participant Information Form and Consent Form, and invited to take part in an interview at a time convenient to them. Editors who did not respond were sent a reminder email a month later; some of these editors, who were deemed important to the project because of the unique position in the field occupied by their journal or approach to the use of media, were contacted further in the hope of securing an interview.

The approach email gave editors the option of engaging in a telephone interview or an interview via Skype (over the internet). The intention was to give editors freedom to choose which technology they were most comfortable using and avoid tipping the power dynamics in favour of the researcher, who favoured Skype for recording purposes. Nearly all editors chose to use Skype and were 'literate' users of the technology. For the sake of methodological consistency, interviews were conducted in the same way, via Skype or phone, and adhered

more or less to the same list of questions, asked in a similar order. There was one exception. One especially time-poor editor, Robert Skinner of *The Canary Press*, responded to questions via email, and although the information gathered this way was less detailed and nuanced than an interview, it was nonetheless deemed valuable to the research.

As time is editors' scarcest commodity, the approach email also gave clear information on how long their interview would take (between 30 and 45 minutes), with the option of requesting that it be shorter (and flexibility to extend it) if they chose, again with the goal of making the interaction as balanced as possible. Most respondents spoke for over one hour.

Interviews were recorded digitally and then transcribed for analysis. While useful for quoting participants 'verbatim', transcribing cannot capture non-verbal cues that are nonetheless communicated in a Skype interview, such as pauses, silences, intonation, and emphasis (Minichiello et al., 2008, pp. 118–119). Where respondents were quoted in the thesis, their words have been reviewed in the original audio file to ensure that their intended message is respected in the reuse of their words.

The sampling resulted in nine interviews with editors from 11 literary journals. Of the editors interviewed, three managed journals that published in print only (one, *HEAT*, is now defunct), four in multiplatform (print and online), and four only on the web. It is interesting to note that over the course of this thesis, multiplatform journal *Stilts* converted to web-only publication, while *Island Magazine*, formerly a multiplatform journal, converted to print only. While maintaining a strong digital presence, *The Lifted Brow* also abandoned its separate digital publication, *Side Eye*, in late 2015. These changes reflect the dynamic nature of the field as it adjusts to new technologies and the possibilities of different materialities.

An interview with a *Meanjin* editor is a noticeable omission from this part of the research. A multiplatform literary journal with a strong print tradition, *Meanjin* has played an important role in debates about how technology might influence the future of literary journals; it is perhaps also the journal with the highest symbolic value in Australia, owing to its strong historical reputation. At the time of data collection, *Meanjin* was to be without an editor for a year between the departure of former editor Zora Sanders and the appointment of its next editor, John Van Tiggelen, who began his tenure in 2016, and applications to the journal for an interview were refused on these grounds. The publication still contributes data to this thesis, however, through the textual analysis of commentary surrounding *Meanjin*'s 'print or digital' future.

Table 2.1 shows the editors interviewed for this project. Their journals are grouped by publication media and then listed in alphabetical order. Multiplatform journals are those that publish both in print and online.

Table 2.1: Participating literary journal editors and their journals

No	Journal	Editor	Media
1	*Cordite*	Kent MacCarter	Web (produces print books)
2	*Going Down Swinging*	Geoff Lemon	Web
3	*HEAT*	Ivor Indyk	Print (defunct)
4	*Island*	Matthew Lamb	Print (formerly multiplatform)
5	*Overland*	Jacinda Woodhead	Multiplatform
6	*Review of Australian Fiction*	Matthew Lamb	Web
7	*Southerly*	David Brooks	Multiplatform
8	*Stilts*	Bronte Coates	Multiplatform (now web-only)
9	*Sydney Review of Books*	Ivor Indyk	Web
10	*The Canary Press*	Robert Skinner	Print
11	*The Lifted Brow*	Sam Cooney	Multiplatform

The interview process

Australian literary journal editors are spread throughout Australia, and the majority who took part in this study were based in Melbourne and Sydney, with one in Hobart. Due to the geographic spread of journals and the prohibitive cost of travelling to interview each editor in person, interviews were conducted via Skype or phone, depending on the editors' preference and the technology available to them. Wherever possible, editors were given the power to make choices about the time, place, and technology used for their interviews, and as a result, interviews were split evenly between Skype and telephone.

This flexibility, in addition to the fact that interviews took place remotely via phone or Skype, occasionally produced some unexpected mishaps. Some interviews were interrupted by dropouts and interruptions. Kent MacCarter's interview, for example, took four calls and

was recorded on three different devices, and was difficult for the transcriber and researcher to make sense of at times. Editors, while busy with work and daily life, seemed eager to fit an interview in, demonstrating a genuine desire to contribute to research in the field and to have their opinions heard.

It was more common for editors to request that I get in touch with them. Of the nine interviewed, five requested that I contact them to pitch an article or send them my completed PhD so that, for their own interest, they could read it. One of these, Ivor Indyk, was also very eager that if any part of my PhD were to be published, he should review it to see that his quotes were accurate, although he stressed that this were not from a 'censorial point of view', but because he was sure 'some of my points will look a bit clumsy' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). While this is the most consummate example, thoroughness and even perfectionism characterised most editors' responses to questions throughout the data-gathering phase of the project.

Interviews were recorded using digital audio-recording software, and were transcribed by a professional transcriber into Microsoft Word documents, which were then analysed.

Interview duration

Editors were generous with their time, and gave each question honest and thorough consideration. While the introductory email requested 30 to 45 minutes of an editor's time, and participants were reminded at the start of each interview that they could say as little or as much as they pleased in response to questions, most interviews went for over an hour, and the shortest for 50 minutes.

Interview questions

Interviews were conducted with an interview guide that typically listed approximately eight open-ended questions. The interview guide was composed after a thorough literature and theoretical review and was directed by the research problem, although it evolved as interviews were carried out, informing the research. For all editors, general issues to be discussed fell into three topic areas listed in the interview guide:

1: the editor's decision-making practices and views regarding the aesthetics of different media and the effect of new media on writing and literary culture

2: the journal's and editor's position in the literary field, including their relationship to tradition and institutions such as funding bodies and the journal's aims and achievements, and the effect this position has on the editor's practices

3: the editor's concept of literary value and its relationship to different media, and how it might have changed over time.

Within these topic areas, the researcher sought to discover narratives of evolution and change, alongside the opportunities and constraints of materiality and technology, particularly in the context of each literary journal's day-to-day functioning. Open-ended questions were asked wherever possible, although it was necessary to ask closed-ended (i.e. 'yes' or 'no') questions to establish the relevance of a certain line of questioning to a specific publication. Questions included:

- Do you have the sense that your journal belongs to a particular tradition, and what is its relationship to this tradition?
- How is it important that your journal is published in print? Why (or why not) do you feel this?
- What types of work do you select for digital publication?

The interview guide was altered for different editors working in different media, as some questions about curation and selection were not relevant to all publication 'platforms'. Interview questions were also adjusted for editors in different circumstances. For example, the interview with Ivor Indyk required a new interview guide, as his journal, *HEAT*, had folded in 2011, four years previously. A list of interview questions is provided in Appendix A.

Characteristic of the in-depth, semi-structured interview, planned questions were adjusted during each interview to suit each participant's input (Minichiello et al., 2008, p. 90). Wherever possible, interviews were conducted in a relaxed, discursive style aimed at encouraging participants to explore their ideas in full and reveal their motivations and sense of aesthetic judgement. This is in keeping with the 'humanistic' approach to interviewing, the key concept of which is 'rapport' (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 52). A relaxed, friendly interview style was used because, as Alasuutari (1995) writes, 'if the researcher makes friends with the informants, and if the informants trust the researcher, they will also be honest with the researcher' (p. 52). Overall, the focus remained on participants telling their 'own stories of their lived world' (Kvale, 2008). When participants covered new ground or pursued ideas not scripted in the interview, they were encouraged to explore their thoughts in full. Where participants covered questions planned for later in the interview, the order of questioning was adjusted.

Interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber and then analysed. During this analysis, certain themes, such as the enduring importance of print (particularly that it represented a counterpoint to digital publishing) emerged. Themes, contradictions, trends, and questions were further scrutinised and compared with all nine transcripts to gain insight into their nuances and counterarguments.

Interview responses

Interview questions, as discussed in chapter one, focused on how editors made decisions and their motivations for using different media, along with the current and future challenges and opportunities for literary journals. In interviews, where editors were given the power to direct the discussion if they wished, some of the main themes that recurred were funding, changing readerships, the cost of production in terms of free labour (especially online), the aesthetics of publishing in different media, and the different ways literary journals are read in different media. Wherever possible, editors were allowed to explore these ideas in their own time and in their own words, with minimal interruption or influence.

The interview process was flexible and gave the editors scope to express any view. When the researcher sensed that editors had finished responding to a specific question, she would move to the next, again leaving room for digressions and tangents. At the end of each interview, the researcher also took time to ask whether editors would like to add anything, or whether there was anything that had not been asked. Interestingly, editors generally said no, but many carried on the discussion and gave a new insight or went into more depth than they had when responding to structured questions. Kent MacCarter, for example, began to talk about how pleased he was to 'see a woman in the driver's seat at *Overland*, and a young one at that', and went on to discuss gender balance among editors of Australian literary journals, completely unprompted.

Tone, language, self-observation

While it is difficult to generalise about the language and tone used by eight different people with different positions, ages, genders, and levels of experience, common traits did emerge, and these illuminate some cultures and connections within the literary journal sphere. Perhaps due to the freedom and power endorsed by semi-structured interviews, perhaps because of the culture of the Australian literary field itself, editors were surprisingly candid in their interviews. Although once or twice editors mentioned, and only casually, that they would prefer a particular comment not to be published publicly, overall, they were

overwhelmingly happy that their opinions, no matter how plainly worded, should go on the record. This openness manifested in the frank, often colourful language the editors used, but also in their attitudes to one another, and to funding bodies. Sam Cooney, for example, was upfront in his assessment of *Meanjin*'s lack of innovation in recent years:

> I like people who work at *Meanjin*, but they have not kept up. I think they're doing the same that they were doing but they're doing … *Meanjin* hasn't been too creative in the last five years as to … as to how they're going about making a literary magazine. But they're still respected, as evidenced in so far as most people know about them and they're still respected because they've got a long name. (2015).

Furthermore, literary journal editors, especially those in more senior positions in the field, were at times critical of how other publications were run. Matthew Lamb, for example, censured what he saw as established journal editors' sense of entitlement to funding:

> When you're at rock bottom you do start thinking, 'What do we need to do to justify our existence?' Whereas other lit mags don't want to do that. They don't want to say, 'Do we really need to ... Do I, *Meanjin* really need to be here?' No one wants to raise that even as a question if only to make it better and to justify that, 'Yes this is why we should be here'. Nobody even wants to raise the question. They just want to go, 'We're here. That's all that matters'. So I think that attitude is kind of ingrained in all of the other editors a little bit. (2016)

Further evidence of the revelatory nature of the interviews, and the critical eye the field casts on itself, came when editors discussed working together. Although some editors (Geoff Lemon and Matthew Lamb) said that they would like to work with other editors to save on distribution and share knowledge, it seems that many find communication or sharing resources difficult; in reality, very little collaboration seems to occur between journal editors in the field. As Matthew Lamb said:

> We have tried talking together. All the lit mag editors. And it never really works … we're all really generous with helping each other. But I think probably at the back of our minds we want everyone else to fail, which is a horrible thing but it's the world unfortunately that we're in. And I think everyone just wants to survive the next year of funding. So they're not that much in the sense of long-term thinking. (2016)

However, this view might simply reflect a particular subsection of the field in which Lamb operates, and the attitudes within that subsection. In contrast to his statement, some editors—most notably those who were young and Melbourne-based—seemed deeply

engaged with one another personally as well as professionally. Sam Cooney, for example, mentioned that he was friends with the editors of *Seizure* (a Sydney journal who did not take part in the study); Bronte Coates mentioned that Cooney was her housemate and friend, and Coates was also friends with editors of *Kill Your Darlings* (another relatively youthful journal). Both Cooney and Coates indicated that discussions about running their journals were common. Still, it would seem that organised cooperation is difficult to maintain.

The editors were unified in some regards—they clearly felt empathy for their peers, most notably regarding the perpetual struggles for funding and readership, and had some social and professional contact. Overall, however, the interview data reveals a field that is surprisingly fragmented, and whose culture and habitus is largely ruled by the personalities of those individuals at the helm of specific publications.

2.2.3 Textual analysis

Textual analysis complements the data gathered from semi-structured interviews—data that is exclusively drawn from participants' 'stories of their lived world' (Kvale, 2008, p. 19). This is because textual analysis offers the opportunity to expand knowledge beyond literary journal editors' experience, drawing data from texts connected to many facets of the literary journal field. Due to the nature of fictional texts, textual analysis can illuminate latent as well as manifest responses to the research questions, uncovering knowledge about materiality's role in the literary journal field, and the ways editors make use of different media. This knowledge is made all the more powerful for being drawn from the creative literary output whose dissemination and promotion is a key focus, and driving force, behind the entire field's very existence.

Why analyse literary texts

Textual analysis begins with acknowledging that texts are exercises in 'meaning-making', and that meaning is also embedded in the social, cultural, and political, all of which contribute to the way interpretations of the world are made. In literary journals, the field's culture emerges from interpretations offered by literary journal editors, writers, and readers, and the texts that circulate between them offer insights into this dynamic. If, as McKee writes, 'texts are the material traces that are left of the practice of sense-making' (2003, p. 15), textual analysis of literary journals allows the researcher to distil some of the discourses that permeate discussion of, and within, these publications.

Hayles provides a useful perspective on why 'literary' work, in particular, is useful in answering questions about media and materiality. For Hayles (2005), literary writing is intimately linked to our human senses, and her work helps illuminate why a study of 'literary' journals is relevant to an enquiry into emerging textualities such as this one. Hayles (2005) writes that the value of literary work to discussions about the digital world lies in the fact that narrative is one of a few important mechanisms available to humans for understanding the world, and that narrative, 'with its evocation of the human lifeworld, speaks to subjectivities that remain rooted in human perceptual systems, human languages, and human cultures' (p. 6). With this in mind, textual analysis responding to the research questions about materiality and media use examines texts published in both print and digital media. Ideas of identity, community, and authority help frame emerging discourses and dynamics in the literary journal field, and illuminate the relationship between literary value and embodied materiality.

Textual analysis in this thesis regards each piece under examination not as a text in itself, but in *con*text—as *literary journal texts*. Therefore, textual analysis engages with the material background and conditions of publication as well as narrative, assessing how specific themes in literary journals have intensified in the 'post-digital' ecology. Under this scrutiny, literary journal narratives feed into a pro-print discourse by reaffirming print's authority in the wake of digital disruption.

Sampling

The project's scope and length limited the number of texts that could be subjected to analysis, removing the possibility of analysing texts from each literary journal in the field, or each journal represented in editors' interviews. Instead, the four texts analysed in chapter six were selected according to strategic and pragmatic criteria.

Journal selection

With scope to analyse four texts, these texts were chosen for their capacity to respond to the research questions, which ask about the role materiality plays in the literary journal field, and how editors use media to achieve their goals. In these research questions, the prominence of editors' goals, and the methodology's interwoven application of textual analysis and interviews, naturally highlighted two journals for consideration: *The Lifted Brow* and *Overland*. The project's early methodological plans for textual analysis stipulated choosing four to five texts from different journals, but during preliminary reading of various publications, it became clear that deeper investigation of certain issues pertinent to the entire field could be accomplished by undertaking a more detailed analysis of fewer journals. While

interview methodology demanded the sampling net be cast as wide as possible to create a representative cohort of literary journals in Australia, with that achieved, the methodology permitted a narrower scope with deeper engagement in key issues common to the field.

These journals emerged from the contextual review and interviews as important and practical choices for textual analysis because text publishing in both print and digital forms (i.e. in multiplatform) provided the best opportunities to analyse, juxtapose, and question the use of different media and its relationship to materiality, and these journals represent both 'sides' of the publishing spectrum within their assemblages. This is especially so because multiplatform journals frequently publish the same texts in different formats, offering examples of what Hayles (2005) has called 'media translation'. The scrutiny of media translation reveals how a text's meaning is recreated in different media—this examination of the various material languages spoken by different media offers insights into the research questions, because it embodies some of the complexity of materiality's role in the literary journal field. The juxtaposition of the same works presented in different media within the same journal also reveals some of the aesthetic and practical decisions editors make when choosing media.

The multiplatform journals chosen for the textual analysis chapter were drawn from the pool of journals whose editors participated in interviews. This was for methodological consistency, and because, as the driving engine of the research project, interviews raised specific issues and questions about individual journals that, when subjected to the scrutiny of textual analysis, yielded further insights into the field as a whole. The opportunity to analyse texts drawn from the journals of interview participants thus facilitated deeper interaction with the research questions. This consistency also optimised the chosen methods, producing data that was interwoven, enriched, and complementary.

Four multiplatform journals were represented by participating editors, as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Multiplatform literary journals from editors participating in interviews

Journal	Editor	Media
Overland	Jacinda Woodhead	Multiplatform
Southerly	David Brooks	Multiplatform

Stilts	Bronte Coates	Multiplatform (now web)
The Lifted Brow	Sam Cooney	Multiplatform

Of these journals, the most suitable were *The Lifted Brow* and *Overland*. At the time this research was undertaken, *Stilts* was on hiatus, and planned to return to publishing as a web-only journal. Due to the inactivity of the *Stilts* website and social media presence, and hard copies of the journal sold out and unavailable at any accessible library, *Stilts* was excluded from textual analysis.

Likewise, *Southerly*, while active online and in print, was excluded because the treatment of texts translated between print and digital limited how well their analysis could respond to research questions. *Southerly* texts provide limited data because the journal chooses to publish its online content drawn from the print journal exclusively in PDF form, maintaining what editor David Brooks, in his interview, called 'a print page aesthetic'. Brooks also commented that the 'verbal image' of the 'print page aesthetic' cannot simply be transposed to digital form, where communicating in text alone 'is not such a good thing' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to see the journal choose the rigid print aesthetic fixed by the immutable PDF format to present their digital works, precluding, as it does, the opportunity to collaborate between materiality and media and explore the hermeneutic possibilities of the screen.

While *Stilts* and *Southerly* were ruled out for the practical and strategic reasons outlined above, *The Lifted Brow* and *Overland* provided generous scope for exploring the research questions and issues common to the field, especially the role media plays in conveying literary value, editors' use of media to communicate through their journals, materiality's role in forming community in literary journals, and strategies for converting writers into readers to ensure publications' long-term viability.

Text selection

Texts were chosen according to criteria that aligned them to the research questions. For this reason, the texts selected featured at least some demonstration of the relationships between materiality and technology in their themes, publication media, or form, even if these connections to the research questions were in no way related to the literary writing field.

Where a print version of the text was chosen, selection was also based simply on whether hard copies were readily available, particularly because of the project's emphasis on paratextual and material context.

Due to the symbiotic relationship between the interview and textual analysis methods, themes that provided the opportunity to revisit and investigate the opinions editors expressed in interviews were also favoured, because applying two research methods to investigate and problematise their responses naturally enriched research question responses. As a result, the texts chosen from *Overland* reveal echoes of editor Jacinda Woodhead's comments about audience development and the politics of reading and writing, while *The Lifted Brow* texts reflect editor Sam Cooney's comments about community and marginalised voices.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

As this thesis responds to questions about materiality's role in the Australian literary journal field and the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, it engages with discussions and debates from several fields of study. These include Australian literary journals and their place in the Australian publishing industry, the emergence of new material textualities and literacies in tandem with the rise of digital technologies, different approaches to constructing and communicating literary value, and the dynamics and structure of the literary field. These areas of inquiry are first framed by debates and discussions that seek to characterise and define the 'post-digital' publishing landscape.

The process of reviewing the literature in these fields uncovers gaps in the knowledge, especially where the main concerns of this thesis intersect: materiality, the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, and, within this context, the idea and ideal of literary value in Australian literary journals. While many debates and discussions are explored in this chapter's literature review, the process of examining the literature continues throughout this thesis, particularly in the contextual review, which engages with contemporary and historical literature to discover traditions and cultures that characterise the Australian literary journal field, and ways of reconfiguring this field in the present publishing ecology.

3.1 THE 'POST-DIGITAL' LITERARY SPHERE

A collection of essays on contemporary publishing in Australia published in 2013, *By the book: Contemporary publishing in Australia*, was assembled in the wake of what editor Emmett Stinson calls *industrial* and *conceptual* turbulence, caused by a changing marketplace and the emergence of digital technology (Stinson, 2013, p. ix, my emphasis). Thompson's (2012) *Merchants of culture* is an important, large-scale sociological study of the 'industrial turbulence' faced by global publishing in recent years, but, for those interested in what Murray has called the 'digital literary sphere' (2015, p. 311), Thompson's work falls short of a truly integrative study of technology and publishing culture—it devotes a single chapter to 'the digital revolution'.

Questions regarding technological developments in the publishing industry can be better illuminated by studies of digital publishing technology's effect on reading culture and consumption. John Naughton's 2014 *From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: Disruptive innovation*

in the age of the internet, for example, brings Clayton Christensen's notion of 'disruptive innovation' to bear on (among other industries) global publishing. Naughton (2014) proposes that disruption will cause fundamental changes and perhaps lead to the 'extinction' of traditional enterprises (p. 122), and thus recalls some binary and, in retrospect, alarmist predictions about the end of print publishing.

Ted Striphas's 2009 *The late age of print: Everyday book culture from consumerism to control* frames digital technology's effects on the publishing industry with more balance, suggesting that the present is a 'dynamic and open-ended moment characterised by both permanence and change' (p. 175), avoiding much of the hyperbole typically levelled at traditional publishing, and going some way to developing a model for the contemporary field: characterised by change, yet tied to traditional models and practices, literacies and cultures.

Industrial changes aside, the *conceptual* changes wrought on literary production in recent years have affected how texts and literacies can be defined from a theoretical point of view. This thesis's focus on 'literary' writing naturally draws attention to the remarkable ways that the 'post-digital' publishing landscape redefines the genre. Collins, in his excellent 2010 study of the convergence of literary and popular reading culture *Bring on the books for everybody*, depicts a change in the literary experience and a change in literary writing in terms of present-day relationships between technology, media, education, reading practices, marketing, and authoring. Collins's (2010) rigorous analysis of a 'complicated mix of technology and taste, of culture and commerce', demonstrate the 'collapse of traditional dichotomies' (p. 7) from which a new, popular literary culture emerges, blending high-brow literary taste with 'technoconsumerism' and the mass market. Likewise, in *The laws of cool*, Alan Liu (2010) argues that the 'literary' is becoming corroded as it is subsumed by the networked culture of information. Both Collins's and Liu's analyses draw attention to the ongoing co-evolution of the idea of the literary alongside information and mass-market technology.

Such conceptual and industrial negotiations between past, present, and future are so ongoing and persistent in the Australian literary field that they constitute a new norm, and their use in this thesis requires a conceptual frame. The term 'post-digital' is thus adopted to describe the continuing and definitive negotiation between old and new in the publishing sphere. In the most recent study of Australian publishing, *The return of print? Contemporary Australian publishing* (2016), co-editors Emmett Stinson and Aaron Mannion borrow from Florian Cramer's illuminating 2015 essay 'What is "post-digital"' to suggest that the

contemporary Australian environment is caught between constant technological change and traditional business models and practices (Mannion & Stinson, 2016, p. viii). Mannion & Stinson (2016) adopt Cramer's term 'post-digital' to describe this landscape. Rather than simply coming *after* the digital, 'post-digital' refers to the 'messy' state of affairs that blurs boundaries between old and new, and preferences constant change over binaries of stability and upheaval. In the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, digital technology is no longer necessarily disruptive, and media use is characterised by a 'hybridity' of 'old' and 'new' (Cramer, 2015, pp. 19–24). This concept is integrated into this thesis's investigation of materiality's role in the contemporary 'post-digital' literary journal field.

3.1.1 Materiality in 'post-digital' publishing

A small number of studies have examined the role of materiality in journals and magazines in this 'post-digital' publishing environment. Le Masurier's 2012 'Independent magazines and the rejuvenation of print' focuses on the role that digital media has played in revitalising print across design and special interest magazines. While literary journals sit beneath the broad definition of independent magazines, Le Masurier's focus on these publications does not address what and how materiality communicates in the uniquely literary context of literary journals, as this project aims to achieve.

Likewise, Piepmeier's 2008 'Why zines matter: Materiality and the creation of embodied community' introduces the concept of 'embodied community', raising the possibility of applying it to publications beyond the zine form. The embodied community concept touches on Hayles's thoughts adopted in this project, and proposes that by harnessing specific material qualities inherent in print, 'the tangible object transforms an imagined relationship into an embodied one' (Piepmeier, 2008, p. 233). Piepmeier's (2008) research, focused firmly on the tactile, handmade, and artisanal qualities of zines, asks whether an 'embodied community' can be communicated through the literary journal form, which is machine-made, but increasingly seeks out an aesthetic that emphasises the material qualities of print—a question to which this project responds.

Hamilton's 2013 study of Australian independent magazine publishing, 'Don't look back: Contemporary independent magazine publishing beyond the digital divide', discusses material relationships in literary journals. Also echoing Hayles, Hamilton (2013) conceptualises the appeal of print in terms of readers' 'material literacy', which recognises meaning in media and their presentations. 'Print', she writes, 'is no longer a delivery

technology but an important component of the publication's content or meaning' (Hamilton, 2013, p. 55). Le Masurier, Piepmeier, and Hamilton all propose that a return to the material attraction of print arises from the digital sphere itself. While they choose terms such as 'embodied community' and 'material literacy' to describe the outcomes of this conversation between media, Hayles's (2005) term 'intermediation' (p. 7) encourages deeper engagement with the processes before and behind these phenomena. Such processes demand more investigation wherever materiality is valued differently, or called into question.

3.2 CONTEXT AND TRADITIONS

In-depth studies of literary journals and their history in Australia are typically limited in scope; their inquiries are often confined to certain periods or to individual journals, rather than attempting to characterise the field as a whole, as this research project seeks to achieve. Many texts dealing with the history of Australian literary journals are also, naturally, confined to the age of print, so do not engage with questions of materiality that have emerged with the intermediating effects of digital publishing technology's rise. While this demonstrates gaps in the knowledge that apply directly to the research questions, historical texts are nonetheless useful in forming a map of the field for the contextual review, which informs and frames the interview and textual analysis.

Some in-depth studies that have informed the contextual review demonstrate such shortcomings, focusing on especially short periods, as Gelder and Weaver's 2014 *The colonial journals and the emergence of Australian literary culture* and John Tregenza's 1964 *Australian little magazines 1923–1954: Their role in forming and reflecting literary trends*. Michael Denholm's two-volume (1979, 1991) *Small press publishing in Australia* maps publications in the field from the early 1970s until the late 1980s.

Other journals, such as *Meanjin*, have been the focus of particularly in-depth historical enquiry: *Just city and the mirrors: Meanjin Quarterly and the intellectual front, 1940–1965* (Strahan, 1984) and *The temperament of generations: Fifty years of writing in Meanjin* (Lee, Mead, & Murnane, 1990) provide detailed information on *Meanjin*'s context and content during the 20th century.

Such studies are complemented by two books of essays on Australian literary journals more generally: *Cross currents: Magazines and newspapers in Australian literature* edited by Bruce Bennett (1981), and *Outside the book: Contemporary essays on literary periodicals*, edited by David Carter (1991). Both volumes are somewhat limited by a scope that is both

broad, spanning significant periods in Australian literary history, and narrow, in that individual essays dealing with themes (in Carter) and specific journals (in Bennett) obscure a view of the field as a whole, and omit analysis of the field at any one moment in time, as this study aims to achieve through textual analysis of contemporary literary journals and interviews with their editors.

Academic journal *Australian Literary Studies* has twice, in 1977 and 1981, featured interviews with editors of Australian literary journals for their perspectives on the field and its role in Australian culture, capturing dynamic moments in the field's history in the words of some of its most influential agents. While these interviews are excellent primary sources of editors' views, they are transcribed without analysis, and their age renders them useful only as primary historical sources. The fact that literary journals at that time existed in just one medium—print—curtails the value of comparing these interview responses with this project's study. That said, editors' reactions to dealing with new technology, such as Roneo printing, do make for interesting points regarding the mutually deterministic role innovation plays in mediating the field.

3.3 CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

3.3.1 Literary journals

Literary journals are by far the most prolific publishers of material reflecting on and examining the literary journal field—particularly when issues related to their funding, relevance, longevity, and media are raised in the literary community. This means that literary journals typically erupt with opinion when certain political decisions or social changes threaten their field. During the late 1990s, for example, when funding cuts were imminent, Australian literary journals published features such as 'The writing on the wall' (Capp, 1995), '… Funding and performance' (Hergenhan & Duwell, 1995), 'Funding for literary magazines in Australia' (C. Thompson, 1997), 'A constant struggle' (Denholm, 1997), and 'The struggles of little magazines' (Hergenhan, 2003).

Likewise, the arrival of digital media in the publishing industry triggered a spate of articles attempting to come to terms with material changes in the field relevant to this project, yielding titles such as 'Abandoning print' (Woodhead, 2010), 'The evanescence of print' (Flynn, 2010), and 'The internet: Friend or foe to the small magazine?' (Alizadeh, 2011). This introspective trend (which continues today) makes literary journals rich primary sources of material on their adjustments to new materialities following digital media's arrival in the

Australian publishing landscape. That said, their self-referential, naturally biased viewpoint does raise the issue of their subjectivity, calling for sources that generate a more balanced view of values, materiality, and change in the field, and editors' decisions about media use. Furthermore, while these editorials and opinion pieces yield excellent insights into how change affects literary journals' stakeholders, they fail to respond to questions about literary journals' purpose beyond a small cohort of editors, readers, and contributors, which the multifaceted viewpoint of this research demands. These questions are further explored in the contextual review, which draws on international writing on literary journals and perspectives from both within and outside the Australian landscape.

3.3.2 The literary journal field

Phillip Edmonds's 2015 *Tilting at windmills: Australian literary journals 1968–2012* is the most recent research on the Australia literary journal landscape, and one of few book-length pieces of academic research that address the field in the 'post-digital' publishing ecology. Edmonds, now a lecturer at the University of Adelaide, is a former editor of the literary journal *Wet Ink,* which folded in 2012, and this work was published as a free e-book by University of Adelaide press in 2015. Edmonds has chosen dates to 'bookend' his work, proposing that these bookends mark changes in the means of literary journal production: the advent of offset printing in 1968, and 'the internet's ongoing deconstruction of physical books and magazines leading up to and around 2000' (p. 7). It is interesting to note that he situates the ongoing 'deconstruction' of the print object in the same year his own print journal folded—2012 (Edmonds, 2012; 2015, p. 7). For Edmonds (2015), the internet causes 'a frantic, repressed desire for hierarchical distinction [and] the literary magazines of Australia were partial evidence of that' (p. 238). He believes the internet has so dispersed literary readers that journals might no longer be able to mobilise the sense of community and literary movement so essential to their character, and that their very existence is under threat as a result.

Edmonds's publication is especially important to consider, as it is the only comprehensive historical record of the Australian literary journal field that includes the revolutionary period of the move to digital publication in the 1990s, and subsequent fundamental changes until 2012, where the study ends. While Edmonds's (2015) writing from a position within the field (as the editor of Wet Ink from 2005 until it folded in 2012) is useful, his persistent representations of 'e-changes' as a 'threat'; to social media as 'counterintuitive'; and of the publication of free online content as a 'vulnerability' undermine

his consideration of literary journals' adaptability, which, he suggests (due to digital disruption), 'may not exist in the future' (p. 278). This thesis disrupts the yoking of a journal's 'conventional notion' to its 'existence' (p. 278), instead proposes that moving from one material entity to another is an act of media translation rather than the death or cessation a form, movement, or genre.

Edmonds (2015) proposes, as does this project, that the 'traditional oppositional role of the magazines' is fading, but attributes the phenomenon to a 'new tech-savvy demographic' that seems 'too mobile and hyper-political to display loyalty to any particular site or publication' (p. 275). Positions such as Edmonds's, suggesting that the rise of digital media has changed people and reading practices, are common in commentary about new manifestations of literary journals, and indeed all genres of writing that have changed or evolved since digital media began to influence the field. Assumptions about the effect of digital communication on readers' attention spans, loyalty, and 'mobility' have been deployed to predict the future for literary journals, which have been depicted as either resistant to inevitable change or disloyal to their traditions and history. Interpretations such as Edmonds's, however, ignore the consideration literary journal editors put into decisions about their use of media, the relationship between context and content, and the novel means these publications adopt to connect with their readers and writers. Most of all, commentary that reduces debate to generalisations about generational or demographic behaviour overlooks important subtleties in the relationship between materiality and literacy, and the elusive evolutionary steps that are taken during times of change—details that are, therefore, at the centre of this research.

Furthermore, it is difficult to untangle Edmonds's position in the field as an editor of a journal that folded during the violent aftermath of e- publishing practices from his attitude to digital media in *Tilting at windmills*. When *Wet Ink* folded in 2012, Edmonds (2012) wrote that 'we are not interested in only going digital, as it isn't for us a meaningful alternative'. Having worked in the literary journal field for some decades, Edmonds's account of literary journals is tinged by his personal experiences, and while this can yield depth and insight into the mechanics and culture of the field, personal involvement can potentially mitigate the relative objectivity demanded by rigorous research, and obscure other facets and viewpoints that are overcome, in this project, by applying an approach to inquiry that welcomes a plurality of voices and possibilities.

While Edmonds approaches literary journals from a personal point of view enriched by theoretical perspectives, Ommundsen and Jacklin's 2008 report for the Australia Council's Literature Board, *Mapping literature infrastructure in Australia*, was commissioned to produce new, objective data on the field by collecting quantitative data and interviewing editors for their comments on the challenges they face. Now eight years old, this report devotes one chapter to literary journals, and is the most recent industry report into these publications. The authors surveyed five important print journals operating at the time: *Meanjin*, *Overland*, *Island*, *HEAT* (now defunct), and the *Australian Book Review*.

The report identifies tension between print and online business models, funding, and an ageing readership as the main challenges to the sustainability of literary magazines at that time. Regarding questions of moving between print and online publishing, the report quotes Jeff Sparrow, then *Overland* editor, as saying that print 'is a model that's worked for a considerable period of time, but does seem to me that it's gradually coming to the end of its road and it's not altogether clear what's going to replace it' (Ommundsen & Jacklin, 2008, p. 72). While useful to this project, which uses a similar interview method to gather data, this research was conducted at a time of uncertainty about the future of publishing media, when popular and literary media warned of an inevitable 'death of print'. While this uncertainty might never quite resolve, digital and technological change now represent the new norm for arts, media, and creative industries (Cramer, 2015). The passage of time and changes in media use encourage a return to Sparrow's question of whether there is any new model on the horizon that might replace print, or whether print will remain the foundation of literary journals' business models.

Two books of collected essays more broadly describe circumstances specific to the Australian publishing industry. Factors such as the collapse of REDGroup Retail in 2011, the merger of Penguin and Random House in 2013, and ongoing debates over parallel importation laws are detailed in edited volumes *By the book: Contemporary publishing in Australia* (Stinson, 2013) and *The return of print? Contemporary Australian publishing* (Mannion, 2016). While the upheavals and changes these essays describe and question have influenced the atmosphere of the literary journal field in recent history, only two essays apply directly to the literary journal field. 'A democratic moment—or more of the same?' by Phillip Edmonds (2013) presents much of the same research that features in the full-length *Tilting at windmills* monograph discussed earlier in this chapter. 'Don't look back: Contemporary independent magazine publishing beyond the digital divide', by Caroline Hamilton (2013)

provides useful tools to discuss the haptic, material qualities of print in small magazine publishing, and is further explored when this chapter considers discussions about literacies and the nature of the 'post-digital' literary sphere.

3.4 'POST-DIGITAL' TEXTUALITY

The evolution of a 'post-digital' publishing landscape over the last two decades has introduced an opportunity to explore the relational, embodied meanings of texts as they are translated into and through different media. Exploring these textualities demands an examination of theories and discussions that considers the complexity of the contemporary mediasphere, its culture, politics, and aesthetics, and assesses their applicability to the research questions and the unique character of the Australian literary journal field.

3.4.1 Convergence and deconvergence

Henry Jenkins's 2008 work *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide* theorises the expansion of one concept across different media, and the collapse of barriers between the professional and the amateur and between media producers and consumers (pp. 3, 24). For literary journals, this process has been manifest for some time in the switch to multiplatform publication, where readers can access the journal on the web, via an e-reader, in print, and interact via social media or in person at live events.[7]

That said, Jenkins' work focuses on fan culture participating in popular games, films, and books, such as the *Harry Potter* series, and there is significantly less evidence of participatory culture in the Australian literary sphere, where many barriers that Jenkins predicted would collapse remain in place—most notably, the continued importance of editors as 'gatekeepers'. Le Masurier (2012) suggests that, although many literary journal editors publish in digital media and are, along with their contributors and readers, 'digital natives',[8] there is an intricate, entangled reaction against 'convergence culture' within their multiplatform or 'converged' publications. Le Masurier (2012) asserts that for independent magazines, 'content is not dematerialised', and 'the more the magazine industry's digital and mobile media experimentation challenges the very concept of what a "magazine" might be,

[7] For an interesting discussion of literary journals' move to multiplatform publishing, see Blanchard (2011), where editors were at pains to point out that a move to digital publication would not signal the end of their journals' print versions.

[8] 'Digital natives' are those belonging to the generation who have grown up using networked digital technologies and for whom remixing, sampling, and online sharing across multiple media are a natural part of the creative process; they also 'presuppose their role as shapers of culture' (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 126).

the more the indies seem to focus on the medium specificity of print' (p. 394). Le Masurier's suggestions are taken further in cultural theorist Jim Collins's suggestion that literary publications are actually undergoing a process of 'deconvergence', and his insistence that, in contemporary literary publishing, the 'uniqueness of the reading experience which must be kept somehow apart from the rest of cultural noise in order to survive', which in turn becomes a part of their promotion and market appeal (De Bruyn & Collins, 2013, p. 199).

That such a process of 'deconvergence' might be able to exist within a 'converged' literary field emphasises the complexity of embodied meaning and the intertextuality of literary journals today. This entanglement of materiality and meaning, which is not easily translated across media nor sequestered in a single medium, demands a theoretical approach to media use in literary journals that allows for the fact that editors do not encounter the question of *either* print *or* digital publication as often as the question of *how* these different media can inform and influence one another, and the different effects of this on both reader and text. Bolter and Grusin's (1999) concept of remediation offers a perspective on how media can simultaneously converge and 'deconverge' in the digital age.

3.4.2 Remediation

The concept of 'remediation' has its roots in Marshall McLuhan's (2013) statement that 'the content of any medium is always another medium' (p. 20). This concept was developed and applied by Bolter and Grusin (1999) at the turn of the millennium. Their remediation proposes that rather than break with media that preceded them, new media refer to, pay homage to, and refashion them (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 65). Remediation is, importantly, enacted *both ways*—digital media leave their mark on old media, such as print, as much as old media leave their mark on the new.

While this theory of remediation is useful in illuminating the ways that literary journals use different media to shape the texts they communicate, applying the concept is limited somewhat by its role in a three-part 'genealogy' of new media that includes two other traits—immediacy and hypermediacy—both of which are designed, according to the Bolter and Grusin (1999), to generate realism. In emphasising realism alone, and in reducing its production to the relationship between two processes, Bolter and Grusin 'miss the social conditions and powers which mediate communication technologies and turn them into (the) "media"' (Day, 1999, p. 731). Furthermore, while there is some interplay between immediacy and hypermediacy in literary journals' publications, and some pursuit of 'the real' in their

representations, Bolter and Grusin's perspective is also limited in that it is firmly located in new media experience. This can be balanced and enhanced by introducing other considerations of social and economic conditions, and the effects of textuality and embodiment from both digital and analogue perspectives.

3.4.3 Intermediation

Hayles (1999, 2004) also builds on McLuhan's work, but explores the way meaning is embodied in our relationships with texts in different technological forms, demonstrating the importance of materiality and how material context plays an important role in our reading of a text in her work on 'intermediation'.

Hayles (2005) acknowledges Bolter and Grusin's important contribution to theorising one type of relationship between different media forms, but seeks to define the ways a text can communicate through its materiality. Intermediation is defined as 'complex transactions between bodies and texts as well as between different forms of media' (Hayles, 2005, p. 7) and offers a theoretical standpoint acknowledging that meaning is made through 'entanglements' of bodies and texts. As 'complex feedback loops connect humans and machines, old technologies and new, language and code, analogue processes and digital fragmentations' (Hayles, 2005, p. 31), Hayles's intermediation is recursive, and continually evolving through relationships with history, technology, and human beings, fitting with the cultural studies approach to the research questions and accommodating the complexity of the literary journal field.

3.5 'POST-DIGITAL' LITERACIES

In her study of Australian independent magazine publishing, Hamilton (2013) discusses the appeal of print in terms of readers' 'material literacy', which recognises that media communicate through their materiality. 'Print', she writes, 'is no longer a delivery technology but an important component of the publication's content or meaning' (Hamilton, 2013, p. 55). This idea has its early in Moylan and Stiles' 1996 print culture study *Reading books: Essays on the material text and literature in America*, which proposes that

> When we read books, we really read *books*—that is, we read the physicality of materiality of the book as well as and in relation to the text itself ... Bindings, illustrations, paper, typeface, layout, advertisements, scholarly introductions, promotional blurbs—all function as parts of a semiotic system, parts of the total meaning of a text. (Moylan & Stiles, 1996, p. 2)

Both Morgan and Stiles and Hamilton, however, lack a theoretical architecture for framing and examining this relationship between materiality and literacy, and in focusing solely on the print artefact, fail to acknowledge that digital texts are embodied, material beings, even if read from the screen.

3.5.1 Paratext

When we consider the dialogic between humans, texts, and media that this study interrogates, it is necessary to consider a text not just as a disembodied work of writing, but according to 'signifying components that should be considered along with linguistic codes' (Hayles, 2005, p. 90). Therefore, a text changes with its material place and through the semiotic strategies of paper, font, screen, navigational tools, and so on. The arrival of digital publishing media has given us an opportunity to see print and digital texts in new light, read in terms of their material embodiments, even as they are translated between different media.

This idea of fluid material literacies can be clarified by introducing the notion of 'paratext' into the theoretical framework of this thesis. First defined by Gérard Genette in his 1997 work *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*, where the concept is described as a 'threshold' between the written and signified text. Comprising information such as the author's name, titles, prefaces, introductions, and book covers, Genette (1997) writes that paratext is 'a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text' (pp. 1–2). Before a reader has begun a narrative, she has already consumed information that indicates how the book should be received and read. However, while introducing foundational concepts, Genette's work is limited by its application to the printed book and is shaped by literacies of print reading.

Jonathan Gray (2010) builds on Genette's work to apply the notion of paratext to media in the digital age, suggesting that in the world of film and television, trailers, posters, and advertising campaigns and other material circulating between text, audience, and industry establish 'frames' through which these products should be consumed (p. 18). For Gray (2010), paratexts fill the space between media, industry, and audience, 'conditioning passages and trajectories that criss-cross the mediascape' (p. 23). While this definition lacks some of the specificity of media that this project seeks to establish, encompassing, as it does, all the textual and cultural components of a potential consumer's horizon, the expansion of Genette's original concept to include new media is useful to investigating materiality's role in assigning cultural value to different media.

3.5.2 Media translation

A key problem for framing the relationship between materiality and literacies in different media is what to make of hybrid texts that appear in different forms—digital, print, and even in 'real-life' performance contexts. Hayles (2005) provides some useful tools to close this theoretical gap, proposing that the definition of 'text' has been detached from its material place, and from readings across print and digital media that take materiality into account. The result of this problem of definition is that when travelling between electronic and print media, as many literary journal texts must, the text is assumed to be separate from its materiality and unchanging between the two mediums.

This assumption was particularly promulgated by enthusiastic e-publishing promoters during the early 2000s. They suggested that those who thought something in the text was lost when switching from print to screen were luddites, bibliophiles, and conservative. At the same time, texts such as Nicholas Carr's 2010 *The shallows* argued that online reading had more negative cognitive effects relative to print reading. Both views present binaries of the usefulness of digital or print reading without considering the subtleties that make for *different* reading experiences, rather than better or worse—these subtleties, once established, can help reveal the role materiality plays in the literary journal field, and the way different media can be used to communicate meaning.

Here, the notion of 'media translation', adopted from Hayles, becomes significant. Hayles (2005) proposes that republishing a text in another medium (print to digital, for example, or digital to print) is in fact an act of translation (p. 89). The same work, when read in different media, is not the same text. Although, as is the case in all translations, something is both lost and gained (in this case, because of material rather than linguistic transformations), the value of the text itself need not. Literary journals frequently publish and republish material across both print and digital media. Hayles's supposition encourages an analytical approach to reading hybrid texts that forces an interrogation of the cultural beliefs and practices behind literary value.

3.5.3 Work as assemblage

In the context of the contemporary literary journal, however, further complexities arise. More than just translations of texts published in different media, literary journals demand a theoretical concept that can encompass interactive elements such as social media interaction and complex feedback loops between different media forms. Literary journals' social media

activity might attract readers to activities at live events, which in turn might be live-tweeted or blogged online. This 'multichannel' publishing of different and the same works causes texts to cycle 'in dynamic intermediation with one another', creating what Hayles (2005) labels 'work as assemblage', 'a cluster of related texts that quote, comment upon, amplify, and otherwise intermediate one another' (p. 106).

When framed as a 'work as assemblage', the contemporary Australian literary journal is not only intermediated in the wider field of media, technology, aesthetic concerns, economics, and culture, but also internally, as every journal publishes across various media (sometimes splitting the same text), and mixes communication and community-building activities online and in person.

3.6 COMMUNICATING LITERARY VALUE

3.6.1 Anxiety and the affective network

Jenkins's (2008) statement that 'old media are not being displaced. Rather, their functions and status are shifted by the introduction of new technologies' (p. 14) is especially relevant to the idea of literary value, as the function and status of print shifts and digital publication introduces new dynamics to how literary works are construed. Examining the debates and discussions around literary value in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape provides the opportunity to discover gaps in the knowledge where materiality and the use of varying media are concerned, and helps shape a theoretical frame that responds to the research questions.

On one hand, for example, Collins' 2010 work *Bring on the books for everybody: How literary culture became popular culture* suggests that the lines between literary and popular culture have been redrawn by the digital age and are more complex than 'unilateral critiques or celebrations of the internet' (De Bruyn & Collins, 2013, p. 193) would have us believe. According to Collins (2010), mass media, especially internet culture, have made literary reading accessible to everyone, shifting the very definition of 'literary' and giving rise to a new 'literary popular culture', which rests on the digital publication and circulation of ideas, adaptations, commentary, and convergence of literary ideas, texts, and codes. This approach is useful, but limited in its treatment of ideas of literary value, as they are defined *within* traditional and established literary cultures, such as Australian literary journals.

At the same time, Liu's 2010 work *The laws of cool: Knowledge work and the culture of information* discusses ways that traditional bastions of literary value are being questioned

and broken down in the 'post-digital' landscape. Liu (2010) discusses the future of literature in the age of information, arguing that 'the academy can no longer claim supreme jurisdiction over knowledge' (p. 21), and that knowledge has relocated to the realm of digitally connected 'knowledge work', the primary concern of which is business. By exploring corporate culture and the impact of technological connectivity on culture, particularly the culture of 'cool', Liu (2010) proposes that 'literary' demonstrates how the phenomenon of 'cool' affects the traditional academy and the teaching and practice of the new humanities in universities and the wider literary community.

For writers and editors, particularly those in a small field that by very definition aspires to a 'literary' ideal, surrendering their work to either the popular or the knowledge economy is a source of anxiety. The rise of the online mediasphere, with its capacity to break down literary definitions, must force agents such as literary journal editors to search for new ways to define and maintain the 'literary' ideal. In her study of how literary writers and editors strive to maintain their positions in the contemporary digital, globalised, media-saturated market, Jacqueline O'Dell (2014) explores how writers and editors seek to manage their reception both on and offline. O'Dell's 2014 *Network anxieties* examines the shifting position of literature in the new media ecology, focusing on the idea of literary autonomy taken from Bourdieu in an age characterised by a 'confusing interplay of digital culture and literary reading' (De Bruyn & Collins, 2013, p. 193). With specific reference to US literary journal and publishing phenomenon *McSweeney's*, her research discusses how writers and editors struggle to overcome 'network anxiety', a term she coins to describe editors' and writers' sentiments about reading in the internet age: the sense that 'literariness' is somehow threatened in its commercialised, popular spaces. O'Dell (2014) characterises this as an era where institutions that traditionally conferred value, such as universities and critics, have become as suspect as 'the network'; influential writers and editors, while rejecting universities or the market when they seek value, nevertheless indulge in 'fantasies of literary autonomy' (p. 18).

O'Dell (2014) describes a complex process that takes place both on and offline, by authors and editors, that positions and counter-positions literary works in relation to the digital sphere and traditional institutions, an endlessly recalibrating process of literary and cultural production. Often, an important part of this process involves maintaining material manifestations of literary work in print and other tangible forms (the highly influential *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* journal, for example, is well known for taking various

forms that accentuate its materiality, such as a cigar box or a bundle of mail). In other cases, the process of managing the relevance of literary texts involves working within digital culture to produce and maintain literary value. O'Dell's concept of the affective network has only been applied in US contexts, where readerships are larger, more engaged, and journals less threatened than their counterparts in the Australian field. Applying the notion of the 'affective network' in the Australian context and asking certain questions about materiality's role in encouraging 'modes of reading' breaks new ground in the research, renegotiating how literary value can be understood in the digital, globalised age.

3.6.2 The auratic power of print

Literary value and its relationship to materiality can be regarded through a range of lenses, especially where the apparent role of print in symbolising literary value is questioned. There is some evidence that readers, writers, and editors are seeking more overtly material means of communicating literary value in the digital age. Speaking on a panel of US literary journal editors, for example, Eli Horowitz of *McSweeney's* journal argued that the rise of the internet 'only intensifies the excitement' of physical objects[9] (Horowitz et al., 2010, p. 65). As Hayles (2005) writes, 'if anything, print readers relish all the more the media-specific effects of books precisely because they no longer take them for granted and have many other media experiences with which to compare them' (p. 32). Therefore, a model for understanding the drive to objectify and even fetishise the print object is necessary to understand the role materiality plays in symbolising or communicating literary value.

Schiermer (2014) situates print fetishisation in a youth culture 'intensely devoted to redeeming the objects of the former generation' (p. 168). Hipster culture, says Schiermer (2014), thrives on 'a shared investigation into the possibilities, potentialities and sensibilities of past aesthetical universes' (p. 176), many of which are situated in superseded media and technologies, such as typewriters, fixed-wheel bicycles, polaroid photographs, and vinyl records, a list to which we might add the printed magazine. For Schiermer (2014), hipster culture is born of a desire to reconcile imitation and individuality, and he situates the popularity of mechanical technology in its capacity to conserve a remnant of this originality.

[9] Other editors also mention a new, auratic appreciation of print. Speaking on US panel discussion *Publishing and the popular consumption of print*, Tod Lippy, editor of design magazine *Esopus*, said, 'I want to give people the sense when they're opening the magazine that they're actually looking at some original object' (Horowitz, Lippy, & Allen, 2010, p. 65). In a 2008 special issue of *The Mississippi Review* on the literary magazine, Marco Roth of US literary journal *n+1* invoked Walter Benjamin's aura, stating that, as both a writer and editor, 'I would rather be in print than online … there is still a kind of aura and, if anything, the aura is growing because of the advent of the new technology' (Rosser et al., 2008, p. 40).

‘In a culture “at its age of digital reproduction”’, he writes, ‘individualisation often goes hand-in-hand with a rescue of the singular and “auratic” objects of the pre-digital past’ (Schiermer, 2014, p. 176).This theorising of hipster culture fails, however, to capture the force of literary value and the dynamics of the literary field that also influence the culture of media in that field. That said, his invocation of Benjamin (1936) and ‘aura’ is helpful, and has broader application in this research project.

Recently, scholars have applied Benjamin’s (1936) concepts of ‘aura’, of iconicity, and of ritual to examine how mechanically reproduced media contribute to the perceived value of work produced in the age of digital reproduction (Adler, 2012; Bartmanski & Woodward, 2015). This application reveals that print attracts both editors and readers because in some senses it carries the ‘aura’ once attributed, in the age of mechanical reproduction ,to the artist’s original work. Printed media could be seen to operate as originals, the presence of which is ‘the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity’ (Benjamin, 1936). Print has taken on the many contradictions inherent in this power—not least the fact that literary journals are produced by computer and printed on digital printers, and have long borne the imprints of digital production. However, the concept does help explain print’s increasing objectification and production values in the digital age. The concept of ‘mechanical aura’ is particularly effective when combined with Hayles’s notion of intermediation: here, the rise of digital publishing and the persistence of screen-reading as a form of literacy in its own right draws attention to print’s differences, which are in turn emphasised, reiterated, and re-evaluated with new reverence.

3.6.3 Symbolising power

Literary value is also knotted to the circulation of power in the literary journal field. While questions of power are often considered in theoretical terms, examining conceptual discussions and debates nevertheless helps inform research design and contribute new knowledge that bridges gaps between theory and practice. Bourdieu demonstrates how the literary field is structured around a struggle for power embedded in symbolic capital, itself a currency of literary value. In Marxist terms, what some editors term the aura of printed goods could be construed as a form of commodity fetishism, and perhaps a way of protecting traditional power structures within the field of Australian literary journal. For Marx, the ‘mystical character’ of commodities obscures the social relationships behind their manufacture and exchange—their ‘fetish’ value (Marx, Paul, & Paul, 1972). Print’s capacity to both conserve and obscure the conservation of power relationships, however, calls for a

conception of power that applies more specifically to literary production and the publishing industry.

For Bruno Latour (2012), the unchangeable, the immutability of printed objects, 'which have the properties of being mobile but also immutable, presentable, readable and combinable with one another' (p. 7), enable institutions to represent and exert power. In many ways, until the disruption brought about by the internet and digital media, literary journals operated like Latour's 'immutable mobiles', objects made up of webs of relationships between technology, people, and inscriptions that circulated, unchanging, representing and exerting the power of a small, consecrated literary establishment. Whether the value of print resides in the printed object's capacity to symbolise the power of a consecrated few raises questions about the role of literary journal editors in the Australian field. This project responds to this gap through its methodology, and this response is foregrounded by the contextual review that maps the traditions of the field and examines the emergence of the contemporary 'post-digital' publishing landscape.

3.7 STRUCTURING THE FIELD: COMMUNITY AND POWER

One of the literary journal's cultural functions is the formation and support of literary communities. Editors frequently cite that forming and supporting collections of writers, artists, editors, and readers that converge on a publication (interacting with it both online, through print, and at 'real-life' events) is an important aspect of literary journals and their promotion of Australian literature's value (Grundy, 2014; Indyk, 2011). Examining the role that materiality plays in fostering an environment where reading and writing matter can reveal how and why different media are valued.

A 'hybridised' community environment, where online connections replace and complement 'real-life' ones, raises questions about the traditional structures of writer–intermediary–reader that characterise literary journals, and the role print plays in this new configuration. When the boundaries between consumers and makers of texts break down, the need for editors as 'intermediaries' or 'gatekeepers' is also up for debate. Although digital technology delivers powerful means for readers, writers, artists, and editors to connect and to collaborate, the use of print to tie people together remains surprisingly important, as do 'live' events. Debates and discussions about these processes poses questions (to which this thesis responds) about how 'hybrid' communities function in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, and the ramifications for materiality.

3.7.1 Imagined communities in the digital age

Benedict Anderson's work *Imagined communities* (first published in 1983) proposes that, in the age of 'print capitalism', publications such as magazines and particularly newspapers could bind people together, and were responsible for the rise of nationalism in the late 1900s (Anderson, 2006). This is because, for the first time, mass media united people with common symbols, interests, and experiences, making it possible 'for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways' (B. Anderson, 2006, p. 36). Former *Overland* editor Jeff Sparrow argues that 'the community around the journal and its political and aesthetic goals not only ensures a base level of financial support but it also fosters an environment in which reading and writing seem to matter' (Sparrow, 2010). Anderson's *Imagined communities* is relevant to literary journals because, while nationalism (or cultural nationalism) might no longer be a preoccupation in the field, the sense of binding a community with common symbols, interests, and experiences remains a sustaining force.

Given that Anderson's work focuses on the age of print, and on mainstream newspapers rather than relatively unpopular publications such as literary journals, it is useful to apply Michael Warner's (2002a, 2002b) perspective to questions about materiality and literary value; Warner, who combines the theory of the public sphere derived from Habermas with queer theory (making room for marginalised communities to emerge), also discusses the digital age. While Anderson's (2006) print communities were bound by the temporality of the daily news and printing cycle (p. 35), Warner (2002a) proposes that online 'publics' are defined by atemporality: continuous, rather than punctual, with the rise of '24/7 instant access' to search engines, newsfeeds, and social media (p. 97).

Warner (2002b) proposes that online, the lack of publishing rhythms and physical circulation might make it challenging to 'connect localised acts of reading' with 'modes of agency in the social imaginary' (p. 69); in other words, to create the imagined communities that Benedict Anderson proposes are bound by print. Still, writing in 2002, Warner (2002b) offers these predictions 'merely for speculation' (p. 69). While these speculations suggest that print could be valued over digital publications because the time-bound circulation of the printed object can be seen to bind communities together, this study's interrogation of these issues in the digital age adds data to this theoretical perspective and applies it to questions of materiality.

Piepmeier (2008), for example, explains how an embodied community is fostered when readers acquire a magazine and experience reciprocal sensations, and the sense of 'being brought into a privileged confidence, of being assumed to be trustworthy … helps make the reader an ally'. For Piepmeier (2008, p. 229), the physical form of a publication is as important as the text's meaning, and the 'sculptural' and material elements of a text communicate messages between maker and reader. She posits that paper might be better suited than digital communication 'for facilitating human connection' (p. 220), partly because paper can bear the imprints of human use on it over time—a thumbprint, a dog-ear—and partly because of the material evidence of editors' 'aesthetic decision-making' that goes into the creation of a paper object.

This thesis provides the opportunity to test such claims about the role of print in binding communities in a 'post-digital' publishing landscape. Semi-structured interviews and textual analysis, foregrounded by the contextual review, provide data to interrogate why print might be preferred by editors who seek to create a community in an environment where 'reading and writing seem to matter' (Sparrow, 2010).

3.7.2 Gatekeeping, power, and dynamics

Understanding how and why materiality is valued in the literary journal field demands an interrogation of the editor's role. Editors are powerful figures in the literary journal community and field, and act as intermediaries between producers (writers) and consumers (readers), performing a key role in cultural production. Looking at the world of print, Geyh (2002) demonstrates how editors give writers legitimacy, transform manuscripts into published works, connect writers with readers through marketing and distribution, and have contributed to artistic movements such as Dadaism. Eisenstein (1968) and Febvre and Martin (1990) both demonstrate the power of the print editor's role in mediating between the writer and the market, determining the place and value of works of art, and alerting the public to worthy writing. They reveal how editors have separated artistic endeavour from profit-driven exchange for as long as the printing press has existed, and how the editor's role has evolved with the publishing industry.

The publishing industry's recent shift to a 'post-digital' configuration requires a re-evaluation of perspectives on cultural production, just as editors' roles have been reframed and redefined. Editors' traditional task of selecting work that they judge to have literary and cultural value has been reframed as a form of 'gatekeeping'. Traditionally performed by

editors and publishers, the concept is now called into question by technologies that enable users to create and share their own work without the need for an intermediary.

While theorists such as Jenkins and a large cohort of writers and commentators have applauded the demise of the gatekeeper in cultural production, in the literary sphere, the notion has been less popular, and 'gatekeepers' retain their traditional roles. Le Masurier (2012), in her article on independent magazines, writes that there 'remains a space and desire for the gatekeeper, and the space and desire to "just" be a reader' (p. 388); Thompson (2012) agrees, writing in *Merchants of culture* that while the 'disintermediation' made possible by the web has been celebrated as removing barriers for anyone who wishes to publish their creative work, gatekeeping is a positive force, part of the blend of 'creativity and marketing nous' that combines the ability to filter ideas, to guide authors, and to match authors to projects (p. 19). Thompson (2012, p. 17) states that while it might be helpful to regard intermediaries as 'gatekeepers of ideas', the somewhat pejorative notion of the gatekeeper can oversimplify the complexity of the relationships that exist in the publishing world, where editors often work alongside writers to develop their work for mutual benefit.

The admitted complexity of these relationships, and the inadequacy of terms such as 'gatekeeper' in capturing them, calls for a more conceptual approach to describing the processes and relationships emerging in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape. John Thompson (2012) draws on the work of Bourdieu, who wrote specifically about concepts of value and power structures of the literary field that are relevant to this project's approach to editors' roles, particularly as Bourdieu also has an interest in materiality. For Bourdieu, the literary field is characterised by a struggle for power, and much of this power is wielded by the intermediary responsible for conferring literary value on aspiring writers. The intermediary is involved in two processes that give a writer's work 'legitimacy', or literary value: selecting it, and publishing it—that is, giving it material form (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). The intermediary passes the symbolic value of the publishing house (or in the case of literary journals, the publication) onto the writer, 'consecrating' the work. This, along with the 'material *fabrication* of the product' (printing), safeguards the illusion of the creator's 'demiurgic capability'—the talent of the writer (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, pp. 167–168). Thus, the writer gains prestige not through the work, or the reader, but the people who discover and promote them: intermediaries whose symbolic capital is transferred to the writer through the equally symbolic act of publication.

Bourdieu, however, wrote before the rise of digital media, and while his focus on the materiality of the act of publishing is still relevant to this project, it requires careful consideration when compared with the act of digital publishing.[10] While not an act of physical creation, digital publication is nonetheless a version of what Bourdieu called 'transubstantiation': the 'magical' transformation of a manuscript into a published work (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 167). This thesis attempts to transpose Bourdieu's theories to the digital age to fashion a model of the contemporary literary journal field and explore editors' decisions to choose one medium over another.

3.8 CONCLUSIONS

This literature review has examined discussions and debates from a range of approaches to questions in the publishing and new media fields. These discussions and debates have contributed histories of the Australian publishing and literary journal fields, approaches to reading and writing in the 'post-digital' mediasphere, and analysis of how literary value and power are constructed and communicated. The review reveals significant gaps in the knowledge where literary value, materiality, and small, independent publishing in the Australian context converge in a 'post-digital' publishing landscape. This thesis responds to these gaps, providing new knowledge on the role materiality plays in the contemporary literary journal field, and questioning the ways that editors make decisions on their use of different media in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape.

[10] Paling and co-authors have completed three studies attempting to adapt Bourdieu's 'rules of art' to the digital age, and have proved useful background to this thesis's application of Bourdieu's work (Paling, 2008; Paling & Martin, 2011; Paling & Nilan, 2006).

Chapter 4: The Literary Journal Field in Context

In recent years, literary journals have been shaped around different preoccupations, ideologies, and goals from those that appear in the literature that describes the field. This is because the majority of this literature was published in the period before the rise of digital publishing technologies in literary journals; this chapter addresses that gap in the research. In doing so, the contextual review describes a recent shift away from traditional artistic and political definitions and into new ways of building communities and maintaining readerships. This shift has, in part, been entwined with the changing material circumstances under which literary journals are produced and published, but simultaneously, is a reaction to a competitive and uncertain atmosphere in relation to funding and the rise of the 'creative writing industry'.

This chapter's contextual review demonstrates how the literary journal field in Australia has arrived at its current state. This mode of examination responds to the research questions about materiality's role in the literary journal field by mapping the changing technological and cultural influences at work in the 'messy', 'post-digital' publishing landscape (Cramer, 2015). It also demonstrates numerous 20th-century traditions and values that have their origins in print, such as cultural nationalism, and suggests that such values are now conceptually tied to the print medium. It thus foregrounds interview and textual analysis, contributing vital contextual information to these methods of research.

The contextual review also sets the boundaries and scope of the project, which considers the past, present, and future of literary journals in Australia. This chapter gives an overview of the main themes and discussions from the earliest days of these publications, but gathers more detail as it approaches the 1990s and digital media's infiltration of the publishing industry. The chapter, therefore, narrows focus from broader cultural and industrial concerns that characterise the field more generally, to specific questions about the role of materiality in the field in 'post-digital' publishing, and the ways editors make decisions about different media.[11]

[11] Recalling that the term 'post-digital' is adopted to describe the ongoing and definitive negotiation between old and new in the contemporary publishing sphere (Cramer, 2015; Mannion & Stinson, 2016, p. viii).

Although technology plays a role in the recalibration of the literary journal field, this project resists a techno-deterministic viewpoint in understanding such change, suggesting instead that any shift in the field's culture must emerge from a plurality of forces, discourses, and agents. A contextual review of the field takes an 'ecological' approach, allowing a multiplicity of factors to emerge, making room for comparisons between past and present, layering causal factors, and enabling the capacity to plot and examine significant landmarks.

This contextual review is divided into two parts. The first forms a plan of the ideologies, politics, and traditions that emerged from the field's first years in Australia until the rise of digital media, and suggests that while these historical aspects remain important to the tradition of the field, much has changed. Part two forms a new atlas of the field as it is today, demonstrating the forces that shape it, the role materiality has played in this reconfiguration, and the effect of these changes on editors' choices and attitudes in managing their publications. This process foregrounds the stories drawn from interviews and textual analysis, providing a foundation of knowledge and context from which to analyse and draw conclusions.

4.1 DEFINING LITERARY JOURNALS

This research contributes a working definition of a 'literary journal' in Australia. This thesis defines literary journals (or literary magazines) as small periodicals in print, on the web, or across multiple platforms that publish a miscellany of writing forms from both Australian and international writers. This material generally includes short fiction, essays, creative non-fiction, reviews, poetry, and interviews, and can include multimedia content such as podcasts and recordings. In order to qualify as an Australian literary journal for this definition, it is only necessary that a publication have editorial staff based in Australia, as many Australian journals have an international focus (such as John Tranter's *Jacket* magazine), or focus on relationships between cultures (such as *Peril* magazine).

Between the pages of literary journals rests an archive of Australia's literary movements, cultural preoccupations, and creative voices. Their earliest editions helped form a sense of nationhood for the British colony, and today, they contribute to an independent literary culture that assist in launching writing careers and records Australia's literary evolution. Literary journals first became common during the industrial revolution, when printing technology improved and the cost of making ephemeral publications on paper became viable. These publications rose to prominence in the early 19th century in Britain and

the US, and while Australian versions also emerged in the early 19th century, they found a firm foothold in the late 1800s when the gold rush population boom increased readerships (Bode, 2012, p. 35; Webby, 2000b, p. 55). Literary journals consolidated their place in Australian culture, with varying fortunes, throughout the 20th century, and since the mid-1990s, literary journals are also online publications. The first literary journal in the world to exist in digital form only was *Jacket* magazine, founded by Australian poet John Tranter in 1996. Today, literary journals reach their readers through different media, and can be published online on websites, as e-publications for download, in print form, or combine these delivery methods into multiplatform assemblages.

4.1.1 Beyond definition

Beyond the above definition, literary journals have many other characteristics in common. Perhaps due to their niche cultural function, they are generally small publications with little commercial value. Some journals have links to institutions, such as universities, while others are staunchly independent. They have a tradition of independence, and are often linked to experimental and avant-garde literature.[12] Literary journals in Australia are generally operated by very small editorial teams and even just individual editors, and have minimal commercial funding or mainstream appeal. Subscriptions to Australia's largest literary magazines hover at around 2,000, and most operate with few staff and small budgets, generally subsidised by state or federal arts funding bodies such as the Australia Council for the Arts (Ommundsen & Jacklin, 2008). In spite of, or perhaps because of these features, they have often contributed vibrant new writing to the Australian literary field, and have played an immensely important role in Australian literature as a whole, responsible for launching the careers of some of the country's most revered writers, such as Helen Garner, Peter Carey, and Tim Winton (Bennett, 2001; Sorensen, 1993).

One notable common feature of literary journals is their aim to publish works of high quality—of 'literary value'—a contested notion that this thesis explores by scrutinising how the notion of 'literary' is at times associated with reading styles and textual contexts that are connected to print. Given the slippery nature of 'the literary's' boundaries and definitions, this thesis allowed editors to situate their journals within this style of writing in interviews. For many literary journal editors, when asked to define what constitutes 'literary' work, ideas about writing quality, rather than genre, were invoked, as well as notions of a text's capacity

[12] Very small such publications with particularly strong ties to experimental work and little-known artists fall into a subgenre of literary journals called 'little magazines'.

to transport the reader into a relationship with the writer's world of ideas and affect—a capacity that was at times linked to a text's material qualities, as well as narrative skill.

Literary journals can also be characterised by their publication frequency, and the rise of digital technology has introduced a new dynamic, different from the typical publication schedule and rhythms of a print journal. Presently, Australian journals range between well-established periodicals that have been publishing for several decades, such as *Southerly*,[13] to the smattering of new journals that appear every year, some of which will only publish a single issue. While some journals publish infrequently, even sporadically, literary journals in Australia that publish in print typically put issues out three times a year, although this can vary from one issue to four. The rhythms and demands of online publishing are very different, however, and literary journal websites generally feature new content as frequently as daily, but generally between every two days and every two weeks.

4.1.2 The publication spectrum

As this thesis explores the material properties of different media specific to the literary journal form, an exploration of the often blurry boundaries between this and other, similar publications requires some clarification. Le Masurier (2012) suggests that independent magazines such as literary journals be regarded as 'ranging across a spectrum, where zines mark the border at one end and mainstream niche magazines mark the other' (p. 385). While the literary content, low commercial value, and independent nature of Australian literary journals clearly marks them as different from mainstream commercial magazines and newspapers, which focus on cover sales and a high percentage of published advertisements, the boundaries between literary journals and a new crop of 'zines' and 'fanzines' that have emerged from increasingly accessible printing, marketing, and desktop publishing technologies in the late 20th century are less clear.

In his work on zines and alternative culture, *Notes from the underground*, Stephen Duncombe (1997) describes zines as 'non-commercial, non-professional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute themselves' (p. 6). Unlike literary journals, even small ones, zines are not made for commercial distribution; they are made by amateurs, and their 'cut-and-paste', homemade design is part of their aesthetic appeal (Le Masurier, 2012, p. 387). Literary journals, on the other hand, aim for high

[13] *Southerly* is Australia's oldest extant literary journal and was established in 1939.

production values in their print magazines, often publishing full-colour illustrations and using expensive paper stock with professional binding.

Part one: Becoming ‘post-digital’—Australian literary journals until the present day

Lisa Gitelman (2006) writes that ‘because they are at some level material, one important quality that all inscriptions share is a relationship with the past’ (p. 20). This section examines literary journals’ histories in order to reflect on how, as ‘inscriptions’, they continue to refer to and be shaped by their past. In the interviews, many editors discussed how awareness of the traditions and history of their journals affected their publishing practices today. As materiality has immense bearing on meaning-making, and inscriptions share a relationship with their past, this thesis proposes that some of the traditions and stories of Australian literary journals that emerged during the print-dominant 20th century echo through the medium today. These echoes give print new meaning in the contemporary, ‘post-digital’ literary journal field, embodying a sense of its literary heritage. This is especially valuable considering when digital publishing’s position as counterpoint—and its power to intermediate literacies across both media—in the field.

Literary journals in Australia are almost as old as European settlement, with the earliest appearing around 1800 (Gelder & Weaver, 2014). For the first 100 or so years of their existence, ostensibly at least, their material form changed little, and they were circulated more or less as codices of paper and ink bound together and read individually. In fact, as literary journals interacted with political, economic, and technological forces, subtle changes in their material form and their intermediated, embodied meaning took place. At the same time, the way literary journals and their editors construed their relationships with institutions and their relationships with their reading ‘publics’ evolved, as did their perceived purpose from both within and outside the field. Each of these subjects is related, and entwined with journals’ traditions and historical reflexivity. It is worth noting that longevity alone still contributes plenty to the identity and cultural value of some important Australian literary journals.

The strength of the association between technological, political, and economic forces, materiality, and changes to literary journals’ relationships and ‘purpose’ is most evident in the vast shifts that coincided with digital ‘disruption’ in the publishing industry between the 1990s and the 2010s. Causing a significant rupture in the evolution of the literary journal, the

rise of digital media brought tumultuous change to all facets of publishing, reading, and writing, as well as to the social, political, and economic spheres where literary work is produced and consumed. For this reason, this chapter focuses largely on this period. Furthermore, while much of the history of Australian literary journals leading up to the 1990s has been the subject of research and publications, from this time onwards, academic inquiry is scarce. This chapter contributes new knowledge about the Australian literary journal's evolution by analysing developments during and after the rise of the internet, and especially by interrogating developments in relation to their effects on embodied meaning and material form.

4.2 AUSTRALIAN LITERARY JOURNALS UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE INTERNET

The brief contextual overview offered in the first part of this chapter is designed not to provide historical detail (this has been achieved by many historical overviews of the field and is beyond the scope of this project). Instead, this section aims to generate themes from the age of print, which, when juxtaposed with contemporary trends, yield insights into recent shifts in the role materiality plays in the field, and more about how editors' decisions regarding different media are influenced by the past. The themes that emerge during the 20th century emerge during the age of print, and are necessarily tied to that medium through traditions and cultures that permeate the field today. These themes include the masculine, bush realist tradition, political and artistic affiliations, cultural nationalism, and the shift to diversity. They are still important to literary journals today, and so form an integral part of editors' negotiations between different media—tied, like their journals' histories, to the print medium.

The history of the literary journal in Australia is one of constant struggle against economic odds, and while most journals survived just a few issues, some, with the help of institutional funding, have published for several decades. *Southerly* is Australia's oldest literary magazine, founded in 1939, but *Meanjin*, *Overland*, and *Westerly* all share comparable longevity. Figure 4.1, reproduced from Edmonds (2015), maps the chronology and relative lifespans of many of Australia's literary magazines:

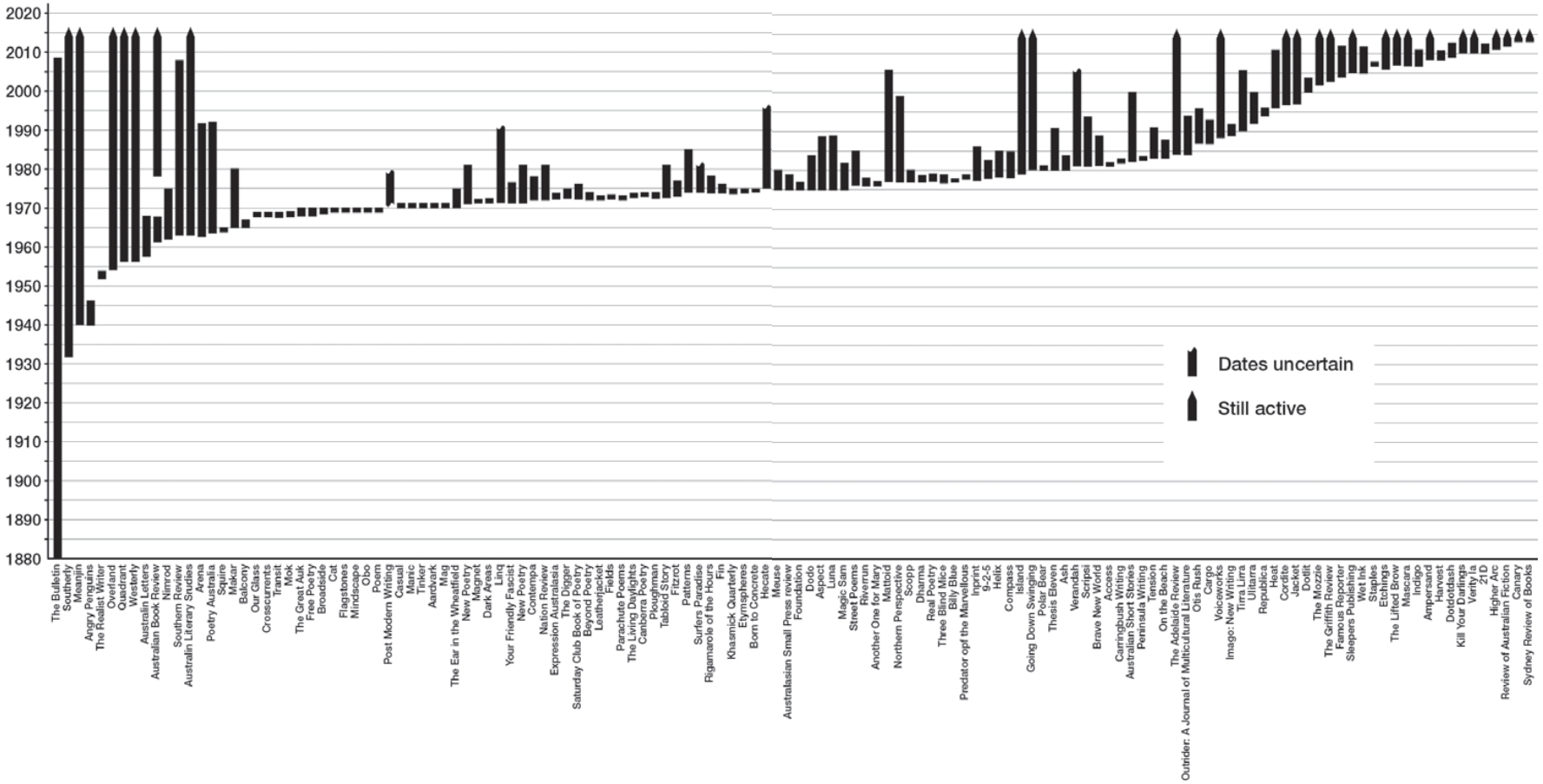


Figure 4.1: Chronology and relative lifespans of Australia's literary magazines 1880–2016 (Edmonds, 2015, pp. viii–ix)

4.3 NATION-BUILDING AND BUSH REALISM: COLONIAL TIMES AND *THE BULLETIN*

Recognising the historical trends that have shaped literary journals reveals how and why the tradition of print might contribute to a language of value embedded in its materiality. This is because literary journals have played an important role in Australian literary culture; and because this role has, until recently, been carried out in the age of print, this medium's materiality has come to embody some of the literary tradition of these publications. Since they were first introduced in colonial times, Australia's literary journals have been concerned with the 'ongoing project of establishing an appropriate literary canon' (Gelder & Weaver, 2014, p. 111). Some early journals, including *The Bulletin*, promoted the establishment of a local, Australian literature, while others preferred to emphasise the importance of 'correct standards of literary taste', reached by 'reprinting the best overseas literature and by applying universal standards in the judgement of local writing' (Webby, 1981, p. 4). This tension between the legitimacy of the old world and the colonial influenced literary journals and literature in Australia until the late 20th century.

While *The Bulletin* was not a literary journal, some historical background to this publication is necessary, since *The Bulletin*'s literary content has had a lasting impression on the field in Australia that still resonates today. While its content varied, and its purpose and aesthetic differed greatly from later literary journals, *The Bulletin* was Australia's longest-running magazine with literary content, surviving for 128 years until it folded in 2008. It found success early, and dominated conversation with its nationalist agenda, made careers of writers such as Henry Lawson, and hosted a bohemian literary clique of writers and critics in its Sydney offices. *The Bulletin* was first published in 1880, at a moment when cheaper paper, more efficient printing presses, and distribution via new railway networks had begun to provide the necessary infrastructure to cultivate a large and responsive readership among Australia's dispersed population (Bennett, 2002; Stuart, 1979, p. 2). '*The Bulletin* school', which promoted 'bush realist' writing and a 'masculine ascendancy', has become associated with literary journals' origins and been criticised throughout the 20th century as limiting the horizon of Australian short fiction and the content of literary journals seeking to emulate *The Bulletin*'s success (Bennett, 2001, 1981).

4.4 ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS AND THE AVANT-GARDE: 'LITTLE' MAGAZINES OF THE 1920s–1940s

Turning from nationalist cultures that emerged from colonial times, literary journals have also promoted artistic schools, and in some cases helped introduce progressive artistic movements into a sometimes-regressive Australian culture. Again, this involvement in artistic developments in Australian culture has increased the symbolic and heritage value of literary journals, and this value is largely associated with the age of print, especially now that digital publishing represents a counterpoint to print materiality. Both the avant-garde movement and modernism arrived late in Australia, and the period between the 1920s and 1940s brought, alongside existing journals publishing more traditional work, a flowering of small, independent, 'little' magazines that sparked and faded in a few issues (Carter, 1993; Tregenza, 1964). These included titles such as *Steam*, *Strife*, and *Angry Penguins*, the journal made famous by the Ern Malley Affair of 1944.

In print, some of literary journals' most defining divisions and movements played out during the 20th century. Tregenza (1964) writes that, towards the middle of the century, the 'particular kind of fugitive, avant-garde, financially independent journal produced in the thirties and forties became rare' (p. 83) and, while the marginal literary sphere of the literary journal was maintained, the period between 1940 and the late 1960s can be characterised as a time when literary magazines generally followed more traditional structures, even seeking to revitalise the 'bush realist' or '*Bulletin*' school of the 1890s. A post-war resurgence of cultural nationalism in Australia was fuelled by new attempts to define 'Australianness', and this period is remembered as a time when (broadly speaking) material of a nationalistic and relatively conservative nature came to prominence in literary journals.

This was also the time when publications such as *Meanjin* (founded in 1940), *Overland* (1954), *Southerly* (1939), and *Quadrant* (1956) emerged and gained influence in the field, their foundations resting in print culture.[14] These journals' influence is made all the more potent by the fact that all are still active today, and all continue to engage with their history and the condition of their longevity, which has been used in some commentary to justify their ongoing funding and importance to the literary field. This longevity is also a source of material ties to the print medium, which binds them to their long tradition of publication and circulation in that medium.

[14] In-depth essays on the early years of these journals are included in Bennett's 1981 *Cross currents*, and Carter's 1991 *Outside the book*.

Post-war anxiety over the 'threat' of communism and the conflicts buffeting cultural and academic discourse arising from the Cold War, Menzies' Communist Dissolution Bill in 1950, and the Labor Party's split over communism (1953–1955) prompted journals to take firm political positions (Bennett, 2002, p. 146). In addition, an influx of new migrants and the rise of consumer culture intensified the literary journal editors' desire to ground the nation in common mythology and to define 'Australianess' (White, 1981, p. 152).

4.5 POLITICS AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM: THE 1950s–1970s

One of the major changes in the literary journal field since the new millennium has been the relaxation of political and ideological affiliations. While it is possible that the rise of the internet and social media have taken over some of literary journals' political roles, the dismantling of their political affiliations has complex sources—some of which are based on materiality, and explored later in this chapter. Relatively speaking, literary journals were more political from the 1950s until the late 1960s than they have been since. *Overland* had roots in the Communist Party and pursued a leftist political agenda, while at the other end of the spectrum, right-wing *Quadrant* was famously founded by the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom; other magazines generally fell in between. In recent years, although *Overland* and *Quadrant* have maintained their respective positions, they have also softened them over time (*Overland* promises to 'foster new, original and progressive work' [2016], while the *Quadrant* website states that 'although it retains its founding bias towards cultural freedom, anti-totalitarianism and classical liberalism, its pages are open to any well-written and thoughtful contribution' [2016]). Edmonds (2015) rightly observes that the stability of literary magazines in Australia was, for a time, weakened by the fact that 'scholarly and public reaction to the journals has tended to float across a fault line of ideological difference' (p. 2). This fault line has certainly become less pronounced as journals have developed as assemblages of works, (publications spread across different media), thus broadening their perspective from political publications to forums for exploring contemporary culture and 'ideas'.[15]

Literary journals' ties to cultural nationalism, still important today, again have their origins in the printed journals from the mid-20th century. This tradition of cultural nationalism and print remains conceptually linked in the field today, and Benedict Anderson

[15] Interestingly, Field noted in her excellent 1980 overview of the field that where fiction and poetry are concerned, most literary journals are apolitical, 'eclectic', and represented diverse authors. A group of contributors to *Meanjin* in 1975, she observed, sounded 'like a disastrous dinner party' (Field, 1980, p. 430).

(2006) describes the power of 'print capitalism' (p. 18) to bind people together and perpetuate nationalistic agendas through the shared experience of reading print material such as newspapers and magazines.

Some of the period's preoccupations might be viewed in more detail by looking closely at *Meanjin Quarterly*. Founded in 1940 and still in print, it is the second oldest literary magazine in Australia, and probably the most influential and best known, with two books devoted to its work and history. Lynne Strahan's detailed *Just city and the mirrors* (1984) is a history of *Meanjin*'s origins and relationships with contemporary journals, and *The temperament of generations* provides commentary on the issues surrounding the publication of significant works in *Meanjin* between 1940 and 1990 (Lee et al., 1990).

Carter (2009), in 'Publishing, patronage and cultural politics', writes that *Meanjin* made the territory of 'creating and sustaining national culture' its own (pp. 366–367). Writing about *Meanjin* in 1984, Strahan perceives a tendency to publish work that was 'confined to the masculine universe of fighting wars, working, boozing, belittling wives' (p. 108). Says White,

> As in the 1890s, the nationalism, the radicalism, the interest in 'the Common Man', were tinged with sexism which emerged, not only from the male environment of war-time, but also from post-war university life ... women artists and, to a lesser extent, women writers, who had been particularly active between the wars, were again pushed to the background. (p. 154)

The male-centred nationalism expressed in the pages of *Meanjin* and other literary journals began to alienate its increasingly diverse, cosmopolitan readership. A 1960 survey of *Meanjin* readers revealed that although Australian fiction remained popular and general approval was high, the journal was overburdened with political, nationalistic content and out of touch, particularly with its women readers (Strahan, 1984, p. 249). Towards the end of the 20th century, literary journals found new vigour by publishing emerging voices in Australian cultural life. Flourishing in the print medium, this diversity came to define many literary journals, and still does today, with ties to the print tradition.

4.6 FROM 'NEW DIVERSITY'[16] TO A 'TIGHTENING' IN THE FIELD: THE 1970S–1990S

Cultural nationalism, bound up in print culture (B. Anderson, 2006), had a lasting and largely advantageous effect on the literary journal field before fading in the 1980s, leaving a void in its wake that has affected questions of funding and literary participation important to this project. The government's eagerness, most notably in the 1970s, to support and promote Australian literature, in tandem with a relaxation of censorship laws, the women's movement, and the counterculture movement, led to a period of 'new diversity' in Australian arts. In 1977, Wilding wrote that 'something happened in Australian writing around 1968–69. Some time then a huge gulf opened between what had been appearing before and the new writing that has appeared since' (p. 117). Tranter, writing in 1978, agreed, identifying the late 1960s as a time of 'a minor cultural shift of some significance', a time of innovation and experimentation (p. 76).

Beginning perhaps with the 'Generation of '68'—a new breed of poets and writers exploring new modes and subjects—a spate of innovative journals launched in the late 1960s, including *Mok* (1968), *The Great Auk* (1968), *Crosscurrents* (1968), and many others. Innovation continued in journals such as *Tabloid Story*, launched in 1972, and soon began to influence more established magazines.[17] During this period, too, academic interest in domestic literature gained legitimacy as a subject of enquiry. The academic journal *Australian Literary Studies*, launched in 1963 and dedicated to the critical study of Australian literature, published special issues in 1977 and 1981 (Hergenhan, 1977, 1981) that included new research on literary journals, testament to their significant role in Australian literature at the time.

Cuts to funding for literary journals, which threatened the survival of many, arrived with the fall of the Whitlam Government in 1975. Subsequently, Australia's key arts funding body, the Australia Council, suffered a reduction in finance of more than 39 per cent, and funding to writers dropped 52 per cent in the years up to 1982 (Denholm, 1991, pp. 8–9, quoted in Edmonds, 2015, p. 109). In 1982, Jim Davison resigned from *Meanjin*, frustrated with the economic difficulties the magazine was increasingly suffering. He wrote to founding

[16] A term coined by Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman in their 1989 book praising the emergence of new voices between 1970 and 1988: *The new diversity: Australian fiction 1970–88*.

[17] See, for example, Jim Davidson's attempts to redesign and realign *Meanjin* to appeal to a younger readership in Campisi (2004); Davidson in Hergenhan (1981); and Lee et al. (1990, pp. 220–230).

editor Clem Christesen that ‘there is now half the office staff we had in 1974’ (Lee et al., 1990, p. 295).

Although *Meanjin* was affected by such funding cuts, Sorensen observes that during the 1980s, established (if parochial) magazines such as *Overland*, *Meanjin*, *Scripsi*, *Quadrant*, and *Southerly* fared relatively well, protected by the Literature Board’s policies, which stipulated that magazines must have published at least four issues in order to qualify for funding. This and other policies disadvantaged newer and smaller magazines, which continued to struggle (Edmonds, 2015, p. 109; Sorensen, 1993). Bradley (2009) demonstrates how more recent developments in the literary journal field can be traced to the deregulation of the international and local publishing industries during the 1970s and 1980s: the introduction of the 30-day rule, which released the local industry from the ‘stranglehold’ of British and American importers. Alongside this, mergers of large publishing houses left a void for independent, literary work, prompting a growth in independent publishing of books and magazines (Bradley, 2009).

The establishment of new literary journals in the wake of these changes reflected Australia’s changing demographics and new theoretical perspectives that sought voices away from centres of power. *Voiceworks*, for example, a magazine for young people’s writing, was founded in 1983, and the journal of multicultural writing, *Outrider*, in 1984. The overall effect throughout the 1980s was a tightening of the flourishing that took place during the 1970s, and Rosemary Sorensen (1993) observes that ‘throughout the 1980s and into the more conservative opening years of the 1990s, the claim to innovation has become more predictable’.

By the time the internet and the online mediasphere had arrived in the publishing industry in the late 1990s, the literary journal field was already in the throes of change. Many of literary journals’ defining traditions—cultural nationalism, political and artistic unions and divisions, and later a dedication to diversity and new ideas—had emerged during the age of print’s dominance. While print publishing’s importance in the literary journal field continues, barely interrupted, today, its role as the sole form of circulation and communication for literary journals is certainly over, as are its economics and some of its culture. Digital ‘disruption’ and the rapid and multifaceted changes that faced the field at the turn of the millennium threw these traditions into new light. Intermediated by a new, digital counterpoint, some of the culture and history of literary journals, which will always have print origins, have become conceptually linked to print publishing, and to an age of print.

This now influences editors' decisions about their use of media, and characterises the various material language spoken by digital and print publication.

4.7 UPHEAVAL AND THE INTERNET: THE 1990s TO THE 2010s

The years coinciding with the rise of the internet reveal a field in the midst of institutional change and economic challenges: factors that demand examination, as they directly affect the role materiality plays in the field today, and literary journal editors' decisions regarding media. While there is no doubt that material choices prompted by the intervention of digital media transformed the literary journal field in Australia, these coincided with government policies and cultural shifts that amplified challenges in the field, so that a 'perfect storm' of factors could be said to have primed it for change—much of which has played out in negotiations with materiality.

4.7.1 Funding: A right, not a privilege

Funding issues have played a significant role in debates about materiality in the literary journal field, and form a part of the complex basis for material changes in recent times. Since the current funding climate was established during this period, its origins bear some investigation. In the Australian arts and culture sector, the creative phase brought about by progressive governments' funding of a cultural–nationalist agenda faded, and in 1994, Paul Keating's Labor government released the *Creative nation* policy, which emphasised the economic potential of cultural industries and the arts (1994). Such economic rationalism presented a challenge to the literary journal field, which had always prided itself as anti-market, and where, in some quarters, there was 'a sense of funding being a right, not a privilege' (Sorensen, 1993). This 'sense' would be challenged over the coming years, as changes to funding practices and debates over literary journals' cost-benefit ratio emerged.

Arising from these policy shifts, that same year, Bev Roberts undertook a review of the Magazine Programme for the Australia Council's Literature Board. She later wrote about her (unreleased) report in *Meanjin* in 1995, revealing that she had 'urged the Board to bite the long-deferred bullet and develop a magazines policy that reflected the realities of the 1990s'—in short, she called for the board to reduce or remove funding from some magazines to see if they could 'fend for themselves' (Roberts, 1995, p. 190). In an article with far-reaching implications, Roberts (1995) argued that magazines that had 'ossified' since the 1970s, their funding program based on 'outdated ideas and principles', its assessment subject to 'qualitative' rather than quantitative analyses and journals reliant on 'palliative care for the

chronically ill' (pp. 187, 189). 'Locked-in clients' were 'claiming the major share of funds as of right, and preventing the provision of support for smaller, newer claimants' so that much of the $1.5 million allocated to literary journals supported publications with static or declining circulations and readerships of fewer than 2,000. The report concluded that turning a few 'sacred cows' into the paddock 'to fend for themselves' might be an appropriate test of these publications' importance to Australian culture (Roberts, 1995, pp. 189, 190).

The debates that pervaded the literary journal field during these years reveal that journals had been pushed to a crisis point even before digital publishing technologies began to 'threaten' print publications. In the years that followed Roberts's report, the mood and general line of defence posted by literary magazines can be identified in the titles of just some of the editorials and essays they published in response to Roberts' essay and subsequent action from the Literature Board: 'The writing on the wall' in *Meanjin* (Capp, 1995), '… Funding and performance' in *Australian Book Review* (Hergenhan & Duwell, 1995), 'A constant struggle' in *Overland* (Denholm, 1997), and 'The struggles of little magazines' in *Quadrant* (Hergenhan, 2003) are just a few examples of editors' efforts to justify their journals' value, and put pressure on funding bodies to continue supporting their publications. In the 20 years since Roberts undertook her review, literary journals' vehement reaction has subsided into acceptance of a new status quo. To date, uncertainty about funding in large part defines literary journals in Australia, with repercussions that are difficult to underestimate, but that have tremendous bearing on literary journal editors' decisions regarding media use, as interviews and textual analysis reveal in chapters five and six.

4.7.2 Cultural shifts: Outdated traditions

Again, at this time, the literary journal field appeared primed for change, demonstrating that many of the material changes in the field had foundations with complexity extending beyond the technological. Roberts's views were, however, shared in some quarters of the field, indicating a general frustration felt for the relationship between outdated funding practices and an exclusive, defensive culture among journal editors and the literary establishment. In 1993, Rosemary Sorensen, then editor of *Australian Book Review*, published an essay about literary journals in *World Literature Today*, expressing sentiments very similar to Roberts's, and condemning the exclusivity of a male-dominated cast of editors, a 'traditional notion of excellence' emanating from institutions that housed literary journals, and a cultural cringe that caused some editors to cast 'yearning glances' towards Britain in search of literary value. Unlike Roberts, Sorensen (1993) did express optimism for

multiculturalism, desktop publishing technology's power to consolidate and professionalise, and improved distribution breaking down the 'staunch parochialism' that had once pervaded the field. The new, diverse generation of journals that emerged in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s took more progressive attitudes, superseding the masculine, realist, patriarchal, and Anglocentric tradition in literary journals, searching for new modes of representation from new viewpoints. That these viewpoints were conceptually tied to print might suggest that digital publishing technologies offered an opportunity to break with unwanted 20th-century traditions. However, such a caesura was complicated by perhaps deeper traditions of literary value tied to the print object; these are explored later in this chapter.

In the 20th century, journals' space had been carved out on a political spectrum, but funding cuts and editorial changes during the 1980s and 1990s had softened divisions, resulting in an 'unexpected alliance between traditional political enemies' (Capp, 1995, p. 184). In the early 21st century, journals redefined their purpose away from political battlelines. Fiona Capp's investigation of the field in 1995 provides early evidence that, in the digital age, symbolising a nationalistic tradition embodied and monumentalised in the printed form was not sufficient to maintain literary journals' value.

With electronic publishing already on her agenda, Capp (1995) interviewed editors of literary magazines about looming funding cuts, and editors of the politically opposed *Overland* and *Quadrant* fell back on tradition as an important component of literary journals' contribution. 'I think that the tradition of magazines like *Overland* or *Meanjin* or *Quadrant* is what makes them interesting. It gives them a kind of narrative', said Robert Manne, then editor of *Quadrant* (quoted in Capp, 1995, p. 184). Capp (1995) expressed considerable doubt in this, arguing that 'the "tradition" argument is simply a way of reinforcing the status quo and justifying the existence of publications that have lost their spark' (p. 184). She wrote, 'it is argued that many magazines cover the same territory, and that the standard 1940s format of poetry, short fiction and critical analysis is not appropriate for the 1990s' (Capp, 1995, p. 184). Alongside the challenges created by the introduction of digital technologies, the void left in the wake of traditional alliances and attitudes created uncertainty in the field. Over time, and as revealed in this project through interviews and textual analysis, editors have come to build communities based around their literary journals that rely, in part, on the language of materiality to fill this affective gap, forming what Piepmeier (2008) has called 'embodied communities' in lieu of political or artistic circles.

The complications of the 1990s to the present day have prompted a phase of self-examination that has, in many ways, come to define the field, and reveals how editors' attitudes to their journals influences their decisions regarding materiality. In 1997, then editor of *Meanjin*¸ Christina Thompson, was also considering the purpose of her publication in light of a recent funding cut from the Literature Board. 'One dividend of the funding debacle', she wrote 'is that it has forced me to ask myself (and a lot of other people), what is *Meanjin*?' (C. Thompson, 1997, p. 455). Thompson's conclusion is partly material, partly semantic. For her, the value of *Meanjin*, with its history and traditions, is defined by a delineation between a literary 'magazine' and a literary 'journal'. Where a magazine might spring up and fade away with a certain moment, she argued, a journal such as *Meanjin* is a 'journal of record', a place keeper, a 'piece of public cultural property' to be cherished for its archival function in Australian literary life (C. Thompson, 1997, p. 456). A monument, perhaps, that embodies the value and traditions of the 20th-century literary journal through the printed 'record'. Still, this argument that print journals should be funded on the basis of their archival value and to carry on a tradition through the medium of print is challenged by the rise of the 'post-digital' publishing ecology. This is not because proposals such as Thompson's fail to demonstrate cultural value, but rather because the idea that the literary journal's role is archival and monumental fails to engage with new material opportunities and new patterns of production and consumption.

Some of the ties that once bound literary journal communities have fallen away since the emergence of a 'post-digital' publishing landscape (Cramer, 2015), and this research proposes that print journals' material qualities have been recruited to fill this centring void. Interviews carried out during this project confirmed that discussion of political affiliation has all but dropped from editors' rhetoric and been replaced with a gentler, vaguer dialogue about engagement in cultural affairs, ideas, and trends in both fiction and non-fiction, something confirmed by Hamilton's (2013) research in the Australian independent publishing sector (pp. 47–49). For example, even Jacinda Woodhead, editor of the historically radical leftist *Overland* (and the most politically engaged journal in this study), seemed to avoid overtly political language in her description of the magazine's goal, instead characterising it as 'to disseminate ideas about ourselves and our place in the world and the world and the possibilities for that world' (J. Woodhead, personal communication, 15 June 2015). She admitted that the journal's role in relation to politics had mellowed, saying that while 'we are continuing a radical tradition in Australia', this

> isn't as common anymore and was much more common decades ago, when I think political activism was perhaps much more obvious. Much more visible. Or there was a sense that you know things could change quite dramatically in the world. (J. Woodhead, personal communication, 11 June 2015)

For Woodhead, too, this change was evolutionary, and a natural response to the threatened and changing cultural and political climate in which Australian literary journals operate.

Similarly, magazines no longer define themselves as proponents of different definitions of 'great' literature, as many—such as the *Jindyworobak Review* or *Angry Penguins* and journals such as *Meanjin*—had promised in the past, whether following Leavisite, cultural–nationalist, or avant-garde traditions. Instead, editors promoted their journals' roles in supporting and growing, or perhaps archiving, Australian literature and literary discussion. As Matthew Lamb suggested, his journal *Island* is 'a place that kind of incubates talent' (M. Lamb, personal communication, 5 April 2016). Overall, the terms in which literary journals state their missions and purpose seem to have softened over the last 20 or so years. As some editors pointed out, the heyday of the literary journal—the 1970s—has passed, and in the last two decades, repeated threats to funding, along with staggering changes in the marketplace arising from digital disruption, have left journals reaching out to as broad an audience as possible. Print has new use for editors trying to appeal to both funders and subscribers, and seeking new ways to bind communities through shared material experiences.

4.7.3 Technological developments: The arrival of the internet

Some of the most significant change in the history of the literary journal field both in Australia and overseas took place from the late 1990s to the early 2010s, alongside the rise of the internet. The brief overview that follows serves to characterise the dynamics of this period of change, which plays a pivotal role in the dynamics of materiality that this thesis investigates. During this period, journals began to move away from paper-only publication and explore online alternatives. Poetry journals were among the first in Australia to publish online; the first literary journal in the world to exist in digital-only form was Australian poet John Tranter's (2012) *Jacket* magazine, founded in 1996. Soon afterwards, in 2002, *Cordite Poetry Review* (2016b) switched from print to online publishing. The early 2000s saw experimentation on behalf of editors as new publishing media were integrated into existing publications, and journals took advantage of emerging opportunities and a networked reading public. Edmonds (2013, p. 59) identifies a 'democratic outbreak' with a new crop of journals

launched in the mid-2000s (including *The Griffith Review*, *The Lifted Brow*, and *Kill Your Darlings*), prompted by cheaper, digital offset printing, desktop publishing software, and, above all, the rise in the popular use of the internet as a means to publish and promote literary journals.

Still, Edmonds (2013) observes that this 'democratic' moment in literary journals' recent history soon subsided into 'a consolidation of "more of the same"' (p. 59) because journals such as *Overland*, *Meanjin*, and *Southerly* were best equipped to weather the challenges of sharing a very limited pool of funds among more journals in an increasingly competitive environment. This environment was greatly complicated by the rise of the popular use of the internet. While providing opportunities to distribute work and connect with readers, Benjamin Laird explains:

> Running a quarterly literary journal in 2011 means doing everything you did twenty years ago, plus updating Facebook regularly, tweeting constantly, creating or sourcing blog content, building websites that support multiple devices, producing video content, making podcasts, publishing the journal in multiple formats, writing a regular e-newsletter, and, on top of all this, coordinating these efforts. With funding bodies now expecting this output, this model is the new baseline. (Laird, 2011, n.p.)

Paradoxically, new publishing platforms favoured established magazines with long traditions, because they had the resources (many derived from university hosts) to pay for writers, editors, and production costs across both print and digital platforms.

4.7.4 Literary journals as assemblages of works: *Meanland*

The integration of new technologies into the literary journal publishing field prompted a new phase of self-examination where literary journal editors addressed questions of materiality and media for their readers and the field more broadly. Scrutinising some of the outputs of this self-examination offers insights into the contemporary attitudes to materiality and media, and foregrounds the recent developments this research investigates. While at times literary journals such as *Meanjin*, *Overland*, and *Southerly* could reasonably have been viewed as conservative forces in the Australian literary field, these publications have also demonstrated considerable adaptability towards digital media, and were prepared to engage and experiment with change relatively early on—particularly compared to the book publishing industry (Bradley, 2009; Hamilton, 2013). Nearly a year before Peter Craven expressed his outrage at threats to *Meanjin*'s 'existence' in 2010, editors Sophie Cunningham (*Meanjin*) and Jeff Sparrow (*Overland*) had collaborated to establish a new blog called

Meanland: Reading in an age of change. It was designed to engage with questions about the future of print, reading, writing, and of literary journals, with careful consideration of the many interwoven dynamics at play. Here, Cunningham explains the purpose of *Meanland* to Chris Flynn:

> We found that when we're on panels we're always expected to say the journal is awesome, the journal will never die. You can't stand up and say, 'we're fucked'. I don't necessarily think we are, but it means the whole panel is slightly disingenuous because you can't talk about the elephant in the room. People also say books will never die, we love the smell of books, but who really knows? We want to try to push the mainstream, conservative conversation in the direction of what if the book does die? What if people start reading e-books? It's not about saying whether it's good or bad, simply that it's happening and how are we going to deal with it? Let's talk about what's happening rather than romanticising the past. (Cunningham, quoted in Flynn, 2010)

The *Meanland* project is significant to questions about materiality's role in Australian literary journals because it represents an early example of an assemblage of works—a new textuality that exists across different media simultaneously, and so presents works that comment upon, translate between, and intermediate one another (Hayles, 2005, p. 105). This early example demonstrates the ways the literary journals adapted to the changes they confronted in the 21st century, and mobilised new resources provided by technology to embody new meaning and forge new communities. Sparrow (2009) believed that the collaborative project would 'reflect on and intervene into the changing nature of reading, writing and publishing' and that by 'engaging in a year-long dialogue across a range of platforms—in print, online and through public events—the project will itself be a practical demonstration of the issues being explored and the ongoing relevance of literary journals'. That issues to do with contemporary reading and writing should be explored through collaboration, intervention, and practical demonstration is not surprising—as Hayles (2005) points out, writing is an embodied form, and as such, registers the effect of technological and cultural changes in its materiality and the ways in which its physical characteristics are used to create meaning (p. 7).

Between 2010 and 2011, *Meanland* embodied some of literary journals' changing characteristics: it published dozens of articles in both print and online media and held 'real-life' discussions at Melbourne's Wheeler Centre. Writers used this platform to explore and

discuss political and theoretical dimensions of diverse reading and writing practices, including reading devices, social media, and copyright.

At the same time, other literary journals were experimenting with combining online and offline content. In 2011, independent Australian news site *Crikey* published an article exploring the new manifestations of literary journals in Australia, including *Kill Your Darlings*' move to multiplatform publishing, *Meanjin*'s integration of print and online content, and diversification of media in *Going Down Swinging*. This article focuses particularly on the capacity of multimedia publishing to 'enhance' literary journals' texts, reinforcing the idea that online 'versions' of journals could exist alongside print journals rather than present an either-or proposition (Blanchard, 2011). Some journals had been doing this—albeit quietly—for quite some time. *Cordite Poetry Review*, for example, ceased print publication in 2000, but still regularly publishes print collections of limited-edition 'literary artefacts' (2016).

4.7.5 New names for 'literary journals': Semantics of assemblage

That *Cordite* uses the term 'literary artefacts' to refer to its print publications is interesting in itself. As literary journals' materiality transformed, so too did the language used by editors and commentators to describe them. No longer did the terms 'magazines' or 'journals'—historically associated with print—seem adequate to describe assemblages that existed in formats such as CD, podcast, live event, print, and online. In the early 2010s, editors began to use other terms for what this project calls 'assemblages of works'. *Seizure*, which was a bi-monthly print magazine until 2014 and now publishes on its website, describes itself as an 'online centric national literary platform'; Cordite is an 'e-zine'; *The Lifted Brow* a 'quarterly print attack journal'; *Kill Your Darlings* a 'cultural publication and website'; *Overland* a 'project'; *Stilts* a 'literary collective'.

The role of literary journals is enmeshed in their form, but also in the semantics of that form. In her discussion of folded journal *HEAT*, for example, Fiona Wright (2011) describes any future manifestation of the journal as a 'platform' rather than a publication—a term with the flexibility to include almost any kind of community interaction or publication, and that also invokes the idea of a stage, amphitheatre, marketplace or podium—a term that encapsulates her vision of new literary journals as 'the *forum* for the exchange of ideas and debate ... The *space* for reputations to be made, and the very real financial support for writers *selling their wares* and words' (my emphasis). Semantically as well as practically, literary

journals had become more, and could do more, when they were no longer bound up in the language of print.

4.7.6 The creative writing industry

Other recent developments that arose in tandem with technological shifts have had tremendous bearing on materiality's role in literary journals and editors' use of different media. Writing in 1995, Duwell and Hergenhan, editors of *Australian Literary Studies*, wrote that many literary journal readers 'are not writers and don't aspire to be' (p. 21). Twenty years later, in an interview for this study, Jacinda Woodhead of *Overland* stated that in a recent survey, 80 per cent of readers identified as writers. The following sections demonstrate how and why literary journal readerships have changed to incorporate a high percentage of writers, and the challenges emerging with this trend. The rise of the creative writing industry has presented an immense and at times unacknowledged shift in reading and writing culture in Australia, and in literary journals, where writers now submit more work, but also drain scarce resources, forcing editors to look for new strategies to fund their publications. Many of these strategies have implications for editors' use of media and the role materiality plays in the field.

In 2006, Mark Davis proposed a 'decline of the literary paradigm' in Australian publishing, writing that shifts in the publishing industry, government support, trade, and globalisation, as well as technology such as Nielsen BookScan, the new cult of the celebrity writer, and a 'broader reconceptualisation of the public sphere itself' were responsible (p. 95). The result was a tightening in the number of independent, literary publishers of the kind that typically published new and emerging writers. Given this shrinking pool of opportunities for writers to publish early in their careers, a rise of the 'creative writing industry' seems an incongruous development. Brook (2012), in his study of the creative writing industry in Australia, demonstrates that between 2001 and 2006, 'written communication' was among the fastest growing 'detailed discipline group' in tertiary study areas, with student load increasing by 52.2 per cent. He suggests that the growth of creative writing studies during this period was mirrored by a decline in enrolments in traditional English and literary studies courses (Brook, 2012). Some of these changes appear to be economically motivated. One interviewee who participated in Brook's study, a former staff member at the University of Melbourne, emphasised that 'the primary reason for adding a creative writing program concerned the contribution student enrolments would make to department finances within an increasingly internally competitive faculty' (Brook, 2012). Brook (2012) concludes that the

incursion of market capitalism into the university system in recent times could be responsible for the sharp increase in writer training.

At the same time as these changes were taking place in academia, opportunities for aspiring writers to train and practise their craft and participate in events and discussion around books and writing expanded. Non-profit writers' centres were established in nearly all Australian states and some regions during the 1990s, offering affordable courses on the art and business of writing. Festival culture also arrived in Australia at around this time, and major events, such as the Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide writers' festivals, grew in popularity during the 2000s. As well as sites that encouraged a mainstream public culture focused on books and writing, Stewart (2010) describes a co-expansion of interest in the characters and careers of authors, and a turn away from literary exclusivity (pp. 1–6). Such changes converged to situate writing as a career, and the life of an author as a site of aspiration. The kind of 'big book' and 'author brand' culture identified by John Thompson (2012) further compounded the impression that a writer's career could be both glamorous and lucrative, if only they could get published.

With the barriers to publishing tumbling thanks to the arrival of digital publishing, enabling any aspiring author to self-publish via platforms such as Smashwords and Amazon's Kindle Direct, this impediment all but disappeared. In spite of this, and many dire predictions about gatekeepers' survival and publishing houses' longevity, long-held beliefs about the value of self-published work relative to traditionally published work held fast, especially among graduates of creative writing degrees who were exposed to traditional, institutional values about literary publishing and print in the academic and spheres. While the promised disappearance of gatekeepers might have encouraged some writers to set out in creative writing, once a short story or manuscript was completed, print maintained its position as the preferred method of 'literary' publication. Given the diminishing opportunities for emerging writers to publish in the wake of the big book culture and conglomeration identified by Davis (2007), prospects to publish new work and gain a foothold in the industry contracted to literary journals and a handful of independent publishers. These developments, and the fact that a short story (typically literary journals publish fiction of about 2,000 words) perfectly fit the assessable word length for university and creative writing course requirements, resulted in a glut of creative writing products finding their way to literary journal editors' desks.

This expansion in the number of writers submitting to literary journals was not, in itself, a problem, but for the fact that it was not matched by an expansion in the number of

journal readers, stunting capacity for growth and sustainability. Considering the immense pressure placed on literary journals during this period by economic and policy changes that emphasised funding allocation as the basis of cost-benefit ratios and economic viability, it is logical that editors should become increasingly vexed by the disparity between subscriptions and submissions. In 2012, the submissions page at *Going Down Swinging* demonstrated one attempt to convert would-be submitters into subscribers:

> If you can, please grab a current copy of *Going Down Swinging*. Last year we received 3,000 submissions from about 1,500 artists. If each of those people bought one copy a year, we would never worry about funding again. If *GDS* is good enough to publish you, it might be worth spending a couple of pints on. Not to mention that readers are more likely to submit the kind of work we want to publish. (Going Down Swinging, 2012)

Brook's (2012) data about the rise of creative writing courses in Australian universities are most revealing when examined in light of his finding a corresponding decline in English and literary studies units and courses offered by universities. For literary journals, this regularly renewed base of readers who contributed to their income was quickly replaced by a cohort of writers whose work demanded to be read—draining, rather than contributing to, resources.

This was borne out in interviews. Several editors expressed frustration at the state of affairs that saw their journals valued only for the service they might provide, and Matthew Lamb was most scathing in his assessment of the 'shadow economy' of the writing 'industry', which generates thousands of new, aspiring writers each year:

> It's technology, it's social things like festivals and stuff. And then yes that all has created the ground for universities and writing courses and writers' centres have all capitalised on to create this kind of shadow economy—with none of that money actually going to people buying books and reading them and writing—to create the illusion that you can be a writer. Which is terrifying. (M. Lamb, personal communication, 5 April 2016)

Literary journals are far more popular than their modest sales figures indicate. Most journals receive at least double (if not triple or quadruple) the number of submissions each year than they have subscribers and, according to Lamb, at least one journal receives 10 times the number of submissions than it has subscribers (Lamb, 2013). As he wrote, it would appear that 'many of our writers want to be supported by, but they do not, in turn, want to

support the very infrastructure that provides them with a potential platform to be published' (Lamb, 2013). The interviewed editors frequently stated that if every writer submitting to their journal would also take out a subscription, the journal's need for institutional support would all but disappear.

Pressures generated by the rise of the creative writing industry in literary journals have both economic and cultural dimensions that affect the role played by different materialities in the literary journal ecology. Literary journals' reliance on the print-subscription model is discussed in chapter five's interviews, surfacing as a key avenue for raising funds. The fact that the majority of an engaged community of writers does not see the value in taking out subscriptions raises questions about literary journals' value more broadly: what is their role in a field whose key stakeholders are unready or uninterested in paying for their content?

While issues related to materiality and media are central to this project, it is important to pause and note the pressing question raised at this point in the research about the viability of literary journals. It appears that the current cultural landscape fosters an environment that values literary production in the cultural sense, but attributes very little economic value to its output. This is made very clear by the trend identified in this chapter, whereby literary journals must take *defining* steps to convert a large cohort of submitting writers into subscribing readers, and editors are frequently frustrated by writers' reluctance to read or subscribe to the journals in which they wish to publish their work. This phenomenon, which Ivor Indyk dubbed the 'virtual reality'[18] of Australian literary journals, was addressed by many editors in their interviews; and while an in-depth exploration of its ramifications is beyond this project's scope, there is some argument that debates over media use and funding that so dominate discussion in the field merely obscure a more pressing question of literary journals' relevance and role.

This reluctance of submitting writers to take out subscriptions has prompted changes in content strategies that are fundamentally transforming literary journals, which now publish more content for writers on the art and craft of writing. In an effort to convince writers to take out print subscriptions and support the current business model, much of this 'writerly' content is published in print, rather than digital, form. Given the limited space available in print publications, this 'writerly' content must be published at the expense of other, more

[18] Indyk adopted the term 'virtual reality' to describe his sense that the literary field can agree that literary journals are a good thing, a necessary thing, but that few people are interested in reading them (I. Indyk, personal communication, 11 June 2015).

traditional fare such as essays, and demonstrates just how definitively the creative writing industry has influenced the field.

Where materiality is concerned, the rise of the creative writing industry and its effect on literary journals has stretched limited time and funds to breaking point. As a result, dedicating these resources to create the immense volume of content that competitive digital publication models demand (particularly where journals also publish in print) is rendered impossible.

The near limitless 'slush pile' of contributions to literary journals is also reflected through the way materiality is used to communicate literary value. The limited space available in print (relative to the conceptually limitless space of the digital publishing landscape) has pushed up its value through simple supply-and-demand economics. The scarcity of space available in print allows editors to be selective when choosing work for this medium, and 'making print' has become a more difficult achievement for writers than 'getting published', which can now occur in any medium. This, in turn, reinforces the idea that literary value and quality must be tied to the print artefact.

Part two: Mapping Australian literary journals in the 'post-digital' publishing ecology

This section considers how the 'post-digital' publishing ecology influences the use of media and the language of their materiality in Australian literary journals. By the 2010s, literary journals were confronting a restrictive economic climate and funding policies that generated uncertainty, so were naturally seeking safety in the print-subscription business model that, for most, represented their sole source of revenue. This was complicated by the rise of the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy', generating a large cohort of would-be writers with aspirations to be published, at the expense of a traditional base of university-educated and undergraduate readers.

Such threats were exaggerated and tenderised by the rise of digital media, which not only created fierce competition for readers, but gave these converging dynamics new urgency, new edges, and new uncertainty. The fact that digital publishing could replace print seemed at once a utopian solution to expensive printing and distribution costs, and an alarming threat to the very existence of journals themselves—would literary journals, as Peter Craven (2010) once suggested, 'disappear into the evanescence of the internet?'

This research proposes that Craven's feared disappearance, situated in the rise of the internet, was in fact caused by a larger void that opened up in the wake of social, economic, and cultural closures in the field (related to digital media's influences in the publishing industry, but not caused by them) outlined in the first part of this chapter: The cultural–nationalist agenda that had flourished during the Whitlam years was no longer a guide or support for literary journals; and the masculine, 'bush realism'-valuing ascendancy of the early 20th century had eroded. Political divisions between journals such as Quadrant and Overland had lost their energy; and journals no longer defined themselves along artistic lines. At the same time, escalating funding threats and the rise of the creative writing industry added urgency to the need to attract and maintain subscribers at a time when universities and creative writing courses generated more and more contributors, often at the expense of readerships.

In the new millennium, literary journals re-established as miscellanies of form, content, and attitude, but consequently became vulnerable to questions about their purpose and

relevance. In other words, literary journals themselves were so threatened, and so unmoored, that they themselves became the site of the 'evanescence' Craven so vehemently feared, but projected onto the internet alone.

In the wake of these threats and uncertainties, literary journals have reconfigured, and with material implications. Literary journals' establishment of embodied communities and affective networks have emphasised the value of print, and this emphasis positions the medium as an essential component of the anti-market discourse surrounding literary journals in an age of 'technoconsumerist' mass marketing.

4.8 REFRAMING THE GOALS AND ROLES OF AUSTRALIAN LITERARY JOURNALS

Writing for *Meanland* in 2011, a time of heightened uncertainty in the field (as this chapter has demonstrated), Ali Alizadeh proposed that any assessment of digital publishing's impact should begin with questions about literary journals' purpose. 'We must', he wrote, 'consider why literary journals exist in the first place, before ruminating on whether their existence is aided or harmed by the internet' (Alizadeh, 2011). Responding to this question provides an opportunity to revisit and redefine the goals and purposes of Australian literary journals in the 'messy', 'post-digital' publishing landscape, and assess the effect of the materiality of different media in this ecology. Reviewing the roles of Australian literary journals in this landscape is particularly germane because, as the preceding sections of this chapter demonstrate, many of literary journals' traditional 'roles' have eroded, leaving a void in literary journals' cultural functions.

4.8.1 The competitive drive

Before arriving at an understanding of literary journals' goals in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, and how they respond to materiality, it first is necessary to understand cultural factors that shape these goals. When editors were encouraged to discuss the goals and purposes of literary journals in interviews, the most interesting discourse emerged not in discussion of specific aims, but in the competitiveness with which they were expressed. Many of the stated purposes of literary journals overlapped, ranging from being arbiters of cultural debate, as in the cases of *Southerly* and *Overland*, to building a community of emerging literary talent in *Stilts*, to connecting writers with readers in *Going Down Swinging*. While journals are less overtly oppositional than they were during the middle of the last century (when they often openly criticised one another in editorial missives), the interviewed

editors still clearly felt a sense of rivalry, of competition. Instead of being shaped around artistic or political ideologies, this rivalry seems to emanate from the threatened and competitive nature of the field, where both readers and funding are drawn from limited and unreliable stocks.

When editors were asked about the purpose and goals of their literary journals today, many chose to define their publications in contrast to others in the same field, attempting to find a point of difference, a proposition of value unique to their publication in a competitive market. Even where journals' professed goals were remarkably similar, editors often indicated that their journal performed better than others. Geoff Lemon, for example, said that for him, *Going Down Swinging*'s first goal is

> Always audience, and I think that's something that a lot of art projects and literary projects neglect or put last, which really gives me the shits, because there's no point making stuff that no one wants to read or hear, and I feel like a lot of writing and a lot of art is very self-involved. (personal communication, 5 June 2015)

Cooney, on *The Lifted Brow*, noted that

> If you want to grow a community you need to be doing it all the time and that' s… I think again, not wanting to rag on *Meanjin*, but *Meanjin*, I can't remember the last time they did an event that was in any interest and that wasn't an event that wasn't handed to them on a platter … And like *Overland* have, the last couple of years, have been coming to us and asking us for advice and we've been doing events with them because we're really good at that. (personal communication, 5 May 2015)

Apart from revealing the rivalrous nature of a field with limited funding and readers, editors' emphasis on the community and audience at the centre of their journals' purpose raises the question of who, precisely, comprises this readership for literary journals.

4.8.2 'Being published' and the problem of autonomy

Literary journals' *raisons d'être* are in large extent shaped by stakeholders and the needs of readers and writers, as well as funding bodies, whose needs are significant to this project, as they shape the material choices made by editors. The contemporary field has been plagued with debate over who, exactly, literary journals exist to serve. In 2013, for example, in an opinion piece in *The Monthly*, Robyn Annear challenged literary journals' fragile autonomy when she suggested that the disappearance of literary magazines would

‘discommode contributors, and potential contributors, far more than it would readers’. She, too, situated this challenge in literary journals’ participation in the ‘shadow economy’ of the writing industry, stating that ‘with the creative writing industry running full tilt … Being Published is what literary magazines are for’ (Annear, 2013). These remarks prompted a flurry of replies from editors and others in the literary journal field. The idea that literary journals serve writers, while aligned with funding bodies’ goals to nurture literary talent in Australia, was distasteful. It undermined the notion that literary journals are valued for their intrinsic beauty, for readers’ encounters with exceptional work, for the aesthetic and intellectual arrangement of work, and for the communities that radiate from their publication—in short, for the conception and realisation of an editor’s autonomous vision.

Interviews reveal that editors view serving the needs of their community as one of the chief purposes of their journals, and fundamental to strategic choices about media use. At the same time, great tensions surround whether writers or readers *should* and *do* constitute this ‘audience’ for literary journals, and how best, materially speaking, to serve them. The problem stems from both artistic and economic anxieties related to Bourdieu’s notions of artistic autonomy. Put simply, the literary field’s autonomy is derived from its capacity to make its own values and markers of achievement, independent of economic and political pressures. Autonomy is essential for generating symbolic capital, and is a mark of aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual freedom (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). If literary journals exist to serve *readers*, then the embodied text of the journal itself—its design, editorial vision, the works it contains, editors’ media choice—and the journal’s autonomy is secure, and represents an artistic achievement and a stock of symbolic capital. If, on the other hand, a literary journal is funded to publish *writers* produced by the creative writing industry, its role becomes one of redistributing government funds and benefitting from the ‘shadow economy’. As ‘anti-market’ enterprises, literary journals typically seek to distance themselves from this kind of commercial or institutional activity in order to maintain autonomy and artistic integrity.

Evidence for this process can be found in interviews and in the several written responses to Annear’s provocation in *The Monthly*. Robert Skinner of *The Canary Press* wrote in a response to Annear,

> at the end of a radio interview the other day, the interviewer suggested that people should buy our magazine because it was important to have a home like ours for people to publish their work. I said, Christ, don't buy it because of that. Buy it because

> you want to read the bloody thing. Otherwise what's the point? We could just sit around in a circle licking each other's faces. (Skinner, 2013)

This reveals that in the absence of artistic autonomy, literary journals lose their integrity. In interviews editors revealed the difficulty of reconciling the demands of readers and writers, and of their own artistic integrity, with the power of the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy', government funding, and competition for a limited pool of readers.

4.8.3 Serving the writer

Given that the question of which stakeholder group literary journals exist to serve has immense influence on editors' choices about media and the way different materialities are valued, this dynamic calls for further investigation. Journals' competition for a limited pool of readers is further complicated by the fact that, with the erosion of literary journals' readership base when university reading courses (such as English and literary studies) were replaced with writing courses, many 'stakeholders' circulating within the literary journal community are aspiring writers first, and readers second. Lamb explained,

> Probably 90 per cent of writers aren't subscribing to any [literary journals]. But they expect to get published in them. Slush piles have a thousand stories there but we know that we're only selling 600 copies. That's ridiculous … How can somebody possibly become a writer without being a reader? (personal communication, 5 April 2016)

This frustration with the rebalancing of the 'audience' for literary journals in favour of writers, and the demand on resources this entails, was a source of considerable frustration and strategic changes for literary journal editors, helping reconfigure the field in recent years.

The fact that literary journals are surrounded by a community of writers presents two challenges. The first is encouraging submitting writers to become readers (or at least to take out a subscription). The second, and a source of considerable tension, is how to participate in the 'shadow economy' of the writing industry without seeming to, because to do so challenges literary journals' autonomy—the source of artistic integrity and symbolic capital.

4.8.4 Converting writers to writer–readers

When asking why literary journals might strive to convert writers to readers and how this affects decisions about materiality, it is necessary to recall that the rise of digital media use in literary journals did not supplant the traditional print business model, and that a

community of paying readers is essential to its success. When interviewed for a report to the Australia Council in 2008, then editor of *Overland* Jeff Sparrow predicted an eventual end to print publishing, describing it as a model 'gradually coming to the end of its road and it's not altogether clear what's going to replace it' (Ommundsen & Jacklin, 2008, p. 72). In time, however, print was not replaced; rather, it was added to in the ways Laird described, introducing social media, websites, blogging, and other platforms to literary journals. Nearly eight years after Sparrow questioned the material future for literary journals in his interview, current editor Jacinda Woodhead stated that print remained important, in spite of predictions and trends in earlier years: 'more than that a few years ago when I started to be the editor of *Overland* there was a real sense that print was dying. And that is no longer the sense' (personal communication, 15 June 2016). Woodhead explained that the *Overland* business model relies heavily on print subscriptions to add revenue to an otherwise unprofitable enterprise and as evidence of success to help ensure institutional funding continues. Reader subscriptions are essential to many journals' survival.

A further reason to convert writers and contributors into readers lies in editors' personal goals for the work they publish. Alongside the economic imperative to increase (or at least maintain) an engaged readership is a genuine desire to disseminate work from talented writers to an appreciative audience—to grow awareness of new Australian writing. In his interview, Indyk discussed the personal motives that drove editors' commitment to their journals, saying,

> I think for me, at any rate, publishing a magazine was always a matter of urgency. It was a matter of commitment or an idealism, you know, an idea, a commitment to Australian literature or to writing, or to a particular point of view. (personal communication, 11 June 2015)

For editors, driving subscriptions and increasing readerships is as much a personal quest as a business imperative, and this means questioning writers' interest and involvement in their journals.

As a result, many editors strive to convert would-be contributors in the literary journal community into subscribers and readers, an activity that has some bearing on journals' materiality. Some journals are targeting writers through their content. *Kill Your Darlings*, for example, regularly runs workshops for aspiring writers, with plans to expand their '*KYD* Writers Workshop' arm in 2017 (Kill Your Darlings, 2016). *Overland*'s newsletter lists opportunities for writers, while *Going Down Swinging* is interested in publishing online

articles that are ‘in any way tangentially related to creativity or writing or artistic expression’ (G. Lemon, personal communication, 5 June 2015). When folding *HEAT* in 2011, Indyk wrote that ‘it is a mistake to think of a community as a market. People can identify with the objects that define them as a community without having to own them’ (Indyk, 2011). Indyk’s comments confirm that while large numbers of writers might surround literary journals, respect, and discuss them, editors have no guarantee that clever content strategy will necessarily generate sales.

Other literary journals have taken more decisive steps to convert contributors to subscribers. *Island,* for example, has introduced a policy whereby any writer accepted for publication who is not a subscriber has the cost of a subscription deducted from their fee, a system that Lemon admitted, reluctantly, to be considering for *Going Down Swinging*. *Overland* offers discounted entry to competitions, and ‘prioritises’ submissions from subscribers over non-subscribers (Overland, 2013). Such measures are not always popular—as Woodhead said, ‘I am still amazed sometimes with the number of readers and writers who want to be published in *Overland* who really resent taking out a subscription’ (personal communication, 15 June 2015)—and are only a short-term solution. Writers might take the subscription as part of their pay or in a package deal to enter a competition, but are unlikely to renew unless their loyalty is grown through receiving, reading, and appreciating the journal.

Given that the imperative of supporting the print-subscription model is thwarted by the fact that the literary journal community (many of whom are writers) does not constitute a market, and forceful measures to convert contributors to subscribers are not a long-term solution, literary journal editors are turning to new ways to generate loyalty to their literary journals and sell subscriptions.

Materiality plays a role in this reconfiguration. Since the language of materiality is in many ways hidden, embodied in the paratextual, it represents an ideal means of reconciling the tension created by editors’ need to protect the impression of autonomy while exploiting the ‘shadow economy’ of the writer–reader audience. Print’s dominance in literary journals’ media hierarchy, for example, could indicate a gesture towards writers who, as many editors testified, generally preferred the medium. While chapter five’s interview analysis proposes that literary journals in print have become fetishistic signifiers of the ‘aura’ of literary value, adopting a symbolic dimension because they represent a counterpoint to digital publication, this chapter’s contextual review focuses on the field to reveal other mechanisms at work in

editors' material choices. The use of print media to establish embodied communities and affective networks around literary journals complements the fetishisation of print as a commodity. These mechanisms bind writers and readers to a journal and develop modes of reading that re-establish journals as spaces resistant to the market's 'shadow economy', even while participating in it.

4.9 FORGING EMBODIED COMMUNITIES

In her study of zine publishing, Piepmeier (2008) proposes the term 'embodied community' to describe the ways that textual, visual, and haptic elements bind readers of print together into an intimately connected and engaged community. Building 'embodied communities' through print publications that point out their own tangible qualities enables literary journal editors to generate loyalty through material possibilities that have opened up since the introduction of digital media into the publishing sphere.

Although discussing zines, which have a more handmade aesthetic, Piepmeier's (2008) examination of materiality in the 'post-digital' landscape can be applied to the literary journal field, where the rise of digital media as a publishing alternative intermediates and draws attention to the value of the print object. A print journal's aesthetic positions it outside the 'technoconsumerist' marketplace, locating readers as friends and equals, rather than customers. Chapter three's literature review described the ways literary journals are increasingly emphasising design elements and the sensory experience of reading the printed version of their publications. Within this intermediation (arising from digital publishing's presence as counterpoint), print takes on significances beyond the merely auratic: its haptic qualities bind readers and writers to a journal, which resists commercial culture at the same time as it participates in the marketplace, thus retaining a sense of artistic autonomy.

In their interviews, editors confirmed the capacity of print to create a sense of connection. In spite of his enthusiasm for digital publishing for literary journals, when folding *HEAT* in 2011, Indyk described the kind of process Piepmeier alludes to—communing with an imagined 'public' through shared sensations of the print reader:

> I've relished the tactility both of the product and the process: the choice of paper, the poring over design alternatives, the marking up of proofs, even the packaging and the way—as the mailout to subscribers begins—the colour and the feel and the scent of the book occupy the senses. I imagine it having a similar effect, in the hands of its readers. (Indyk, 2011)

As intermediation between print and digital publishing has made the haptic qualities of print more noticeable, editors are learning to exploit this effect Indyk describes. Cooney, for example, agreed in his interview that having a printed journal played a role in developing community in *The Lifted Brow*, and associated this capacity with its tangibility—'people relax around it because they have something to grab and hold onto and talk about' (personal communication, 5 May 2015). More significantly, for Cooney, *The Lifted Brow*'s print version is key to the journal's success in growing subscriptions. He reported that 'since day one [we] always have increased our subscriber numbers month-on-month and year-on-year … I can't imagine that growth happening but without a print magazine to revolve everything around' (personal communication, 5 May 2015). For literary journals in the 'post-digital' present, print is exploited to generate a physical focus for literary journals' assemblages, an affective centre that anchors loyalty and binds people together.

While literary journal editors had some difficulty explaining precisely *how* the physical incarnation of their texts binds people together and helps secure their journals' futures, Piepmeier (2008) situates print's power in digital culture. She explains that zines have risen in importance at a time when 'the body is silenced and elided' by computer culture (Piepmeier, 2008, pp. 230–231). Benedict Anderson (2006) situated the 'imagined community' in the shared experience of reading daily newspapers at the height of print capitalism—where this community was forged through the shared 'ceremony' of opening and reading the daily paper (p. 35), and this rooted his or her experiences in everyday life, Piepmeier (2008) positions this grounding in materiality, in the body, writing that the 'body humanises, and zines provide a kind of bodily engagement or a bodily surrogate, that leads to intimacy, connectedness' (p. 224). Importantly, this intimacy is compounded by the existence of the internet as a seemingly *dis*embodied[19] counterpart, driving readers towards the pleasure of the physical object.

4.9.1 The print ecosystem: *Overland*

The embodied community has a particular dimension in *Overland* because this journal recognises the large proportion of writers that constitute its readership. As such, *Overland* provides an opportunity to examine how an embodied community might function in the literary journal field, and what ramifications this formulation has on materiality. In her interview, *Overland* editor Jacinda Woodhead stated that in a recent survey of her journal's

[19] Although this project asserts, after Hayles (2005), that screen reading *is* embodied, just differently from print and with different literacies and textualities.

readers, over 80 per cent 'identified as writers' (personal communication, 15 June 2015). Directing 'writerly' content to the print medium helps convert writers to subscribers, and cements those who take out one-off subscriptions (to take advantage of *Overland*'s submission policies) as long-term readers. In courting writers in its print journal, the publication exploits the material and embodied language of the print medium to encourage loyalty, generating a self-sustaining 'print ecosystem' within the physical journal. In this way, *Overland* is able to participate in the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy' without necessarily appearing to profit from it.

Since late 2014, when *Overland*'s reader survey took place, regular columns on writing have appeared in its pages, each issue featuring three or four short features from established writers examining questions of writing, reading, creativity, and other topics of interest to writers. The preference for such content in the print edition confirms a strategy Woodhead hinted at in her interview:

> We thought, 'Well if there's a large percentage of our readership we should be trying to talk to them about some of the things that are specifically important to them about the industry as well'. And so we decided to publish a bit more on writing as a craft but also as an industry. (personal communication, 15 June 2015)

This writerly content appears to replace *Overland*'s more traditional political fare in the print journal. Woodhead described *Overland*'s new content strategy as putting political, timely, and polarising pieces online, where they could ride waves of public interest, be shared, and spark comments. An examination of the content published in issue 223 of *Overland* (Winter 2016), for example, reveals that nearly a quarter of the entire issue is dedicated to topics related to writing, compared with 15 per cent devoted to politics and dissent.

Overland's writerly content strategy presents an opportunity to look more deeply at the embodied communities' relationship with the material language of print. In publishing a large proportion of writing *for* writers, *Overland* is able to benefit from the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy' without seeming to participate in it, but *Overland* can also be regarded as a particular case where discourse about materiality is strengthened in perpetuating a cycle that could be called a 'print ecosystem'. Warner's (2002b) suggestion that reader participation in a publication can be a powerful and normative force validates the power of this cycle (pp. 50, 70). The journal—itself a text—communicates messages about different media to a writerly audience, and in speaking to an audience of likely contributors,

discourses about materiality become embedded in the habitus of the field, and thus perpetuated. The ways that such discourses about the value of print emerge from the print ecosystem in *Overland* are explored in more detail in chapter five's textual analysis, but demonstrate the potential of embodied communities to confirm and reaffirm the value of print to the literary journal field.

4.10 THE AFFECTIVE NETWORK

Where embodied communities rely on the language of materiality to obscure the commercial drivers behind literary journals' enterprises, some journals are more overtly confronting economic and cultural anxieties of the 'shadow economy' through their use of media. O'Dell (2014) proposes that US journal *McSweeney's* has adapted to the evolution of the literary marketplace in the new millennium by adjusting the traditional attitude and role of the literary magazine entirely (p. 184). According to O'Dell (2014), *McSweeney's* neutralises anxiety surrounding technological consumerism by creating an 'affective network' that makes readers feel invested in its success, breaking with convention and market genres, and 'training its community to prioritise a mode of reading based in belief rather than scepticism' (pp. 186–187).

The following sections demonstrate some of the similarities between US journal *McSweeney's* and Australian journal *The Lifted Brow*, providing an opportunity to examine the role materiality plays in the 'affective network' and in an Australian context. Within *The Lifted Brow*, the 'affective network' is transposed to the unique context of the Australian literary field and exploited to manage the problem of simultaneously participating in and resisting the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy'. This is achieved, in part, through material means, harnessing the language of print to signify value and community that exists outside the commercial market.

Several Australian literary journals, including *Kill Your Darlings* and *Going Down Swinging*, are now taking after *McSweeney's* adapting their language, content, and media use to construct an affective network. *The Lifted Brow* represents the most powerful example of the influence of *McSweeney's* and the use of affective networks in Australia's reconfigured field. *The Lifted Brow*'s affective network becomes a protected, if liminal, space centred on the print journal, where the 'meaningfulness' of literature is amplified by the material qualities of print and a sense of community generated around it. Key to *The Lifted Brow*'s exploitation of the affective network is its place within the Australian literary journal field.

The journal situates itself as a 'counterpublic' that seeks to represent marginalised groups and taboo subjects, and strive for social justice. From within a highly digitised culture print drives a literary annexe in *The Lifted Brow*, which sidesteps the exploitativeness of the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy' and generates a sense of loyalty to the journal.

4.10.1 *The Lifted Brow* and *McSweeney's*: Parallels

There are numerous parallels between *The Lifted Brow* and *McSweeney's* that support the proposal that the Australian publication has adopted a similar attitude and tone to generate an 'affective network' around its print journal, and that this has affected the way materiality is valued in the field. In late 2014, six months before editor Sam Cooney participated in an interview for this thesis, editors of *The Lifted Brow* travelled to San Francisco, to the offices of *McSweeney's*, where they 'hung out' with *McSweeney's* editors and redesigned the 'flagship print publication', subsequently launching its issue 25 anew in March 2015 (Pase, 2015). Even before this formative research project, which transformed the bi-monthly newsprint tabloid to quarterly journal, *The Lifted Brow* owed a debt to Dave Eggers' famous US publishing 'concern'. In tone, vocabulary, and in the development of an 'affective network', *The Lifted Brow* has borrowed much from *McSweeney's*. As Cooney himself has said, 'they make the best looking books and magazines in the world; we'll keep copying them!' (Pase, 2015).

McSweeney's launched in 1998, at first publishing the print journal *Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* alongside online humour pieces. Since then, it has grown into a publishing house of novels, poetry, children's books, and other periodicals (notably the literary bi-monthly *The Believer*). *McSweeney's* is known for the exaggerated fetishisation of the printed object, producing editions in fantastic incarnations, such as a story on a deck of cards that can be shuffled in any order, or a cigar box of ephemera (Horowitz, Lippy, & Allen, 2010, p. 63).

Where materiality is concerned, the redesign of *The Lifted Brow* in early 2015 emphasised material qualities of the book form, moving away from the ephemeral, disposable newspaper format and into a heavyweight, A4, perfect-bound journal of 130 pages, and away from black-and-white to full colour. Such a move exploits the medium's capacity to support an embodied community around it, but also to communicate seriousness and literary value. Katia Pase (2015) wrote in a review that *The Lifted Brow* had 'reintroduced the artefact-ness of the object … lending weight to the content'. That this renewal highlighted the material

qualities of print publication echoes the sentiments of *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* editor Eli Horowitz, who, in a 2008 roundtable, stated that 'we're making a thing, so we tend to try and make the thingiest thing possible' (Rosser et al., 2008, p. 41). Like *McSweeney's* before it, *The Lifted Brow* is now a publishing house, having produced its first fiction novel in 2016 (*The island will sink*, by Briohny Doyle), and with plans to continue to publish 'a book or two a year' (Cooney, 2015).

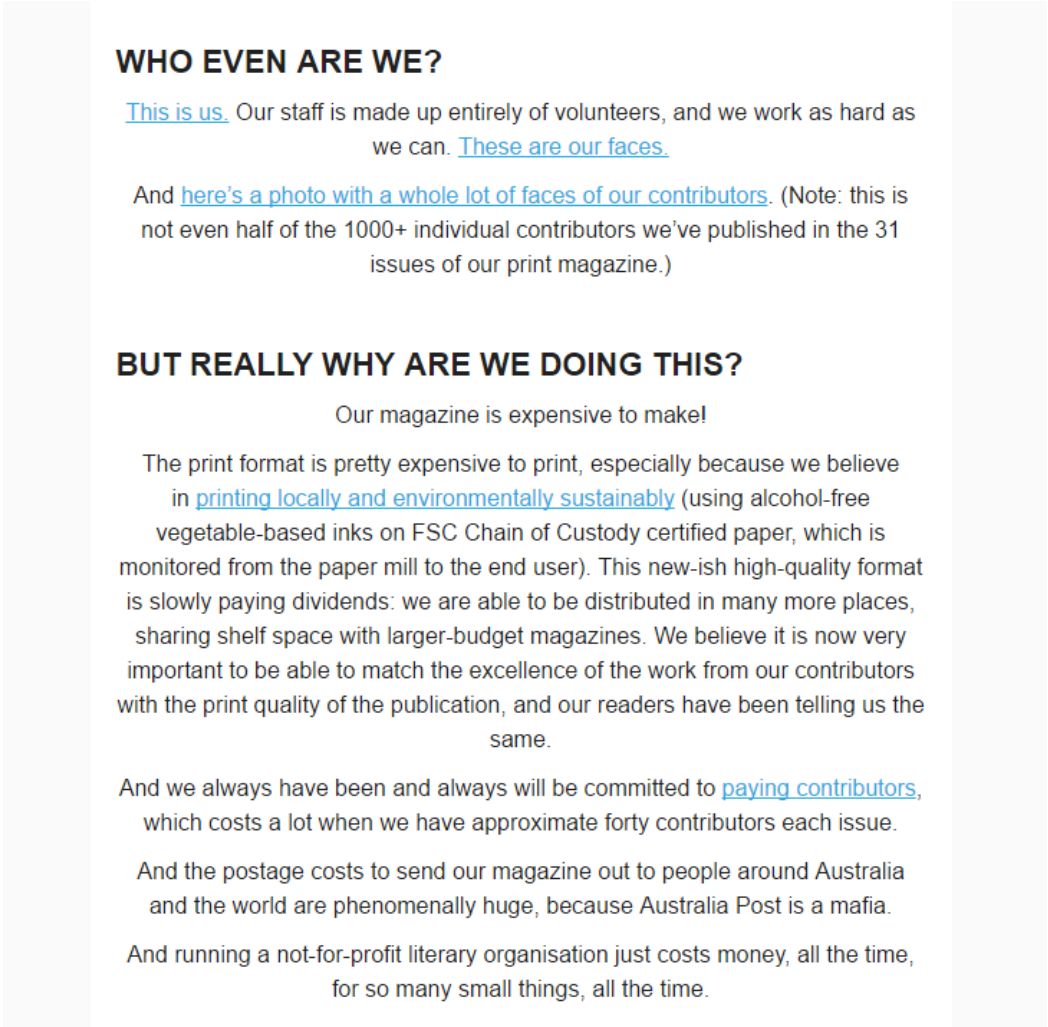
4.10.2 Materiality and resisting the marketplace

According to Collins (De Bruyn & Collins, 2013), *McSweeney's* has contributed a new reading protocol to an age of globalised literary mass marketing and 'popular literary culture'. For him, *McSweeney's* cultivates a reading community that both celebrates literary and printed writing while thriving in the digital marketplace, and he suggests that this is achieved by introducing a culture of reading that enters into dialogue with technological consumerism, at once reflecting on and participating in the popular market (De Bruyn & Collins, 2013, p. 202). This dialogue and ensuing culture of reading is echoed in *The Lifted Brow*'s (and indeed other Australian literary journals') materiality, aesthetic, and emphasis on community. At the same time, the desire to evade technological consumerism and 'globalised literary mass marketing' has parallels in Australian literary journals' desire to reconcile reliance on and resistance to the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy'.

O'Dell (2014) demonstrates how *McSweeney's* 'produces a feeling of human connection through its anti-market discourse' (p. 185), a feat similarly achieved in *The Lifted Brow's* position in the field as a 'counterpublic' that seeks to publish the works of marginalised groups and taboo subjects. *McSweeney's'* simultaneously anti-market and commercial stance is also achieved through the attitudes the journal strikes to its own profit-making activity. The language used to promote the journal indicates to readers that subscribing is both 'a mutual act of recognition between reader and text bound up with the logic of the market' (O'Dell, 2014, pp. 189–190); in other words, an exchange that acknowledges the market forces at work behind it, but proceeds anyway because a powerful sense of community supplants the commercial transaction.

A recent newsletter promoting a subscriber drive by *The Lifted Brow* (Figure 4.2, below) reveals how the journal strikes a similar attitude to consumerism, emphasising the personalities behind the publication. The advertisement focuses on the human dimension of exchange, offering photographs of staff and contributors: 'Our staff is made up entirely of

volunteers, and we work as hard as we can. These are our faces'. At the same time, the community benefit of buying a subscription is emphasised (environmentally friendly production, the benefit of paying contributors), drawing on the foundations of the affective network: 'The print format is pretty expensive to print, especially because we believe in printing locally and environmentally sustainably … And we always have been and always will be committed to paying contributors' (The Lifted Brow, 2016b). The result is an emphasis on the human over the commercial that nonetheless acknowledges the 'technoconsumerist' market in which the journal is forced to operate. This acknowledgement removes anxiety about the market and allows for the establishment of a literary mode of reading that maintains artistic autonomy.



WHO EVEN ARE WE?

This is us. Our staff is made up entirely of volunteers, and we work as hard as we can. These are our faces.

And here's a photo with a whole lot of faces of our contributors. (Note: this is not even half of the 1000+ individual contributors we've published in the 31 issues of our print magazine.)

BUT REALLY WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Our magazine is expensive to make!

The print format is pretty expensive to print, especially because we believe in printing locally and environmentally sustainably (using alcohol-free vegetable-based inks on FSC Chain of Custody certified paper, which is monitored from the paper mill to the end user). This new-ish high-quality format is slowly paying dividends: we are able to be distributed in many more places, sharing shelf space with larger-budget magazines. We believe it is now very important to be able to match the excellence of the work from our contributors with the print quality of the publication, and our readers have been telling us the same.

And we always have been and always will be committed to paying contributors, which costs a lot when we have approximate forty contributors each issue.

And the postage costs to send our magazine out to people around Australia and the world are phenomenally huge, because Australia Post is a mafia.

And running a not-for-profit literary organisation just costs money, all the time, for so many small things, all the time.

Figure 4.2: Newsletter from *The Lifted Brow* promoting a subscriber drive

Alongside this, the affective network's ethos of reading is generated through the material language of print. O'Dell (2014) suggests that print, 'as the sign of traditional literary culture, can become compatible with the transforming technoconsumerist market',

allowing journals to exploit the possibilities of embodied communities because cultivating a network of followers is dependent not only on creating a feeling of extra-consumerist benefaction, but on making these feelings 'tangible and dependable' through physical, readable objects (pp. 197–198). The affective network is thus itself a kind of embodied community because it relies on the binding power of the tangibility of printed artefacts.

By making readers and subscribers feel invested in its publication, like *McSweeney's*, *The Lifted Brow* (along with other Australian literary journals in its wake) establishes an affective network of readers that enables it to sit both within and outside the market of the the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy'. By drawing attention to the individuals behind the exchange of goods, reminding readers of the embodied community inherent in the printed object, and giving a human dimension to the journal's marketing and sale, a new mode of reading that sits both within and outside the market is created and reinforces *The Lifted Brow*'s autonomy. Just like *McSweeney's*, this 'ethos of reading' is generated through the language of materiality, instructing readers on the attitude they should strike towards a text, and more than that, binding a community of readers together.

4.11 CONCLUSIONS

The contextual review is a mode of investigation that demonstrates shifts and changes and identifies relationships and between causes and effects. Taking an 'ecological' approach to the literary journal field, this chapter has plotted historical points of influence in these publications' material traditions, pointing out that print represents a material link to the history of the field, imbuing a sense of heritage value in that medium. It has then turned to demonstrate how an intersection of these traditions, and cultural, economic, and technological forces in play at the close of the 20th century led to a recalibration of the field. Materiality has played a significant role in this recalibration, but it is necessary to note that changes did not arise in response to digital media's interventions alone, although the new possibilities and uncertainties that digital publishing introduced added a sense of urgency to the challenges the field faced as it approached the current 'post-digital' state of 'messy', but relative, stability (Cramer, 2015).

Alongside cultural shifts that removed journals from many of their artistic and ideological traditions, these challenges were, in large part, related to funding matters. Uncertainty around funding was exacerbated by the rise of the 'creative writing industry', which generated a 'shadow economy' that channelled money away from publishers and

writers and into courses and festivals, suggesting some exploitation of aspiring writers' dreams of being published. For literary journals, this shadow economy increased the strain on editors' resources, while undermining a traditional subscriber base of university-educated readers studying subjects such as English and literary studies. The shadow economy in turn affected how editors used content, and media and its materialities, to communicate value and achieve their goals.

The result has been a change in focus, in purpose, for literary journals in Australia. While editors are passionate about disseminating excellent work to a community of readers, the fact remains that writers, in large part, make up an important stakeholder group for literary journals, and this has implications for literary journals' materiality and places value on some of the qualities of print. Editors have been forced to reconcile the discomfort of participating in the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy' with the need to survive, and have developed novel ways to participate in this market while maintaining an appearance of autonomy and independence from commercial activity—all of which have material implications that affect editors' choice of media, again prompting them to favour print. Chapter five's interview analysis deepens this investigation into the cultural and economic factors that define materiality's role, and how editors use media to connect with readers. Chapter six's textual analysis provides the opportunity to examine points raised in this contextual review, and interviews, from readers' perspective and at a textual level, where influences from many stakeholders in the literary journal field intersect.

Chapter 5: Interviews

Interviews with literary journal editors provide data that respond to both this project's research questions, which ask what role materiality plays in the literary journal field, and how editors use media to achieve their goals. Interview analysis reveals that print's material qualities play a significant role in communicating literary and economic value, and in expressing literary journal editors' power and creativity, so that a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print could be said to operate in the field.

As a result of this intermingling of literary and economic value, other relationships between literary journals and their materiality develop in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape. For example, there is increased emphasis on the symbolism of printed publications, which has contributed to their reincarnation as fetishised 'art' objects. Furthermore, while digital publication still plays an important role in the 'post-digital' literary journal field, with editors matching literary forms and content with the appropriate media for the best effect, this is offset by editors' characterisation of digital reading as distracted and commercialised. By contrast, print was characterised as a quiet 'space' for the contemplation of serious, 'literary' work. That said, in their interviews, editors spent relatively little time discussing the needs of their readership, a gap in the knowledge that chapter six's textual analysis seeks to address.

5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Literary journal editors' opinions, activities, and decisions construct the world of the literary journal, and the semi-structured interview method was chosen because, as Kvale (2008) writes, the qualitative interview is 'a key venue for exploring the ways in which subjects experience and understand their world' (p. 11). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to uncover and understand the at times personal, instinctive decisions behind the editors' choices in the use of different media, and the role of materiality in the literary journal field more generally, because they provided participants with freedom to explore ideas and the power to control the direction of the exchange.

This highlights one vital aspect of semi-structured interviews for this project: they allowed participants to respond to the research questions 'in their own words' (Kvale, 2008, p. 1). This freedom empowered participants who, it emerged, felt that their opinions and

experiences went somewhat unacknowledged and unheard by arts funding bodies and decision-makers. Editors' eagerness to contribute to the research was significant, and suggested a general neglect of considered consultation in a field that is, by and large, publicly funded.

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews provided a great degree of flexibility, which allowed surprising insights to emerge. The nuances of editors' attitudes towards print emerged from the language and tones they used to describe their activities in this medium. These distinctions were communicated verbally, and are unlikely to have been captured through methods such as questionnaires or surveys. Likewise, the use of interviews meant that editors replied to questions in an entirely ad hoc fashion; since they are as a passionate, fraught, overworked, and opinionated group, recording their thoughts 'live' and uncensored meant that the full spectrum of their opinions—from exuberant, to enraged, to stubborn, to downright dismissive—was captured too.[20] Such powerful and organic data is unlikely to have been captured in a written medium that required considered and structured responses, or provided opportunities to revise answers.

5.2 THE EDITORS AND THEIR JOURNALS

Nine editors of Australian literary journals were interviewed for this project investigating the role of materiality in the literary journal field, and how editors make decisions about media use. These nine editors represented 11 publications (Ivor Indyk is the editor of both the *Sydney Review of Books* and the former editor of now-folded *HEAT*, and discussed both in his interview, Matthew Lamb was the editor of *Island* and the *Review of Australian Fiction*, and also discussed both). This sample was deemed large enough to gather a good cross-section of attitudes representative of the field, and also to reveal the diversity of opinions and approaches within it. For example, about a third of the editors interviewed managed journals that published in digital media, while the remaining two-thirds published in multiplatform, and two publications published in print only. Additional media used by literary journals whose editors participated in an interview included audio and video recordings, standalone digital publications (e-pubs), live events, websites, and blogs, as well as social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. The following section gives an overview of the journals: their position in the field, their editors, and their use of media.

[20] Editors often swore, critiqued other editors' work, and revealed which writers were difficult to work with and which were pleasant. They criticised and praised governments, arts administrators, publishers, festival co-ordinators, universities, funding bodies, writers, students, rival publications, and each other.

5.2.1 Why editors?

Literary journal editors' views and activities are particularly important for addressing the research questions about materiality's role in the field, and how editors make decisions about different media. Editors' unique roles position them to provide detailed knowledge about their publications, stakeholders, and artistic and operational fields. While this thesis established, especially in chapter four's contextual and historical review, the various cultural, traditional, institutional, and historical influences that affect decisions about literary journals, the fact remains that journals are most often managed by a single editor or very small team of co-editors. As this research seeks to understand both the social and material ways literary value, a sense of community, and other, similar factors are constructed, understanding how these individuals' decisions are made is vital. This point of view is tempered and complemented by the textual analysis undertaken in chapter six—this analyses the research questions through the texts themselves, which operate at the interface of reader, writer, and editor.

Acting as human interfaces between digital and print worlds, editors are also able to provide data that responds to the role technology and materiality play in configuring literary work. While this method defers to the editor's power, this project also considers that the role of the literary journal editor, like many in the publishing industry, has been challenged and altered by the influence of recent technology that has conflated producers and consumers. Once powerful arbiters of cultural value and the only means by which writers could reach a wider readership, editors are no longer strictly necessary for publishing work. In the 'post-digital' publishing landscape, signs of symbolic and cultural value embedded in the materiality of media such as print become more important as symbols of both editors' power and literary value. Changes to literary journals' use of media are read in light of these developments, as editors renegotiate their own roles, as well as those of their publications.

In responding to the question of how literary journal editors achieve their goals for their publications, it is necessary to understand the nature of their role in producing a literary journal.

Hennion (1989), in his important study of popular music producers, describes intermediaries as essential to components of social fields as they 'produce the worlds that they want to make work for them' (p. 402). This concept is effective in explaining the importance of editors to this thesis, which investigates how editors situate their journals, responding to new technologies and trends in reading and writing. Journal editors carry out

the job of publisher, developmental editor, copy-editor, finance manager, business development manager, and marketing and communications manager; they produce their publications by performing nearly all the tasks that bring them into being.

Understanding these processes enables the investigation of a symbiotic relationship between digital and print publication, making room for the fact that editors encounter the question of *either* print *or* digital publication less frequently than the question of how to combine the two publication methods, how they can inform and influence one another, and the different effects on both reader and text. At the same time, discourses and symbolic properties continue to circulate through the field, and in the case of the Australian literary journal, generate a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print—which, as a counterpoint to digital media, acquires the symbolism of literary value, durability, and authority.

5.2.2 Why edit a literary journal?

The research questions' focus on literary journal editors reflects the fact that many literary journals are managed relatively autocratically, with a single or (rarely) joint editor making decisions, which are then followed up by a cast of sub-editors, genre or form-specific editors, or interns. A small number of journals, such as *Island*, have a board to which decisions are put before changes to the magazine are made, but by and large, literary journal editors wield a large share of the decision-making power over their publications. Further to this, literary journal editors are clearly heavily invested in their publications—in both concrete and abstract terms. Editors frequently donate a large amount of their own time to their publications and, unless their journal is tied to a university department and the editor employed by the institution, literary journal editors are rarely paid for their work at all—in spite of spending near full-time hours running their publications.

Understanding what motivates editors to work for little remuneration helps illuminate their attitudes to their journals, and how they value literary production, which in turn has some bearing on their use of different media. The interviewed editors were all passionate about their work discovering and publishing new writing. About half had had long tenures at their journals—some with barely any pay—yet this contrasts with the tenures of other staff who, editors reported, are hard to retain. It seems that some of the reward of working on a literary journal is embedded in the power to make decisions, lead personal discoveries, and work as the head of a publication, and hence create its contents, character, and community.

This notion is explored further in this chapter, as the interviews are analysed in light of economic and cultural factors influencing the field.

In this research's consideration of one group operating in the literary journal field, it is essential to acknowledge how circumstances and backgrounds common to this group might influence data. It is safe to assume—and the interviews confirmed this—that many editors of literary journals chose that career with a view to developing a future in the book publishing or writing industry. Furthermore, several came from literary backgrounds, were university-educated in the humanities, and valued print through a somewhat traditional 'love of literature' that is associated with the book and printed objects. For many editors, working with print was a choice based on personal preference and enjoyment, as Geoff Lemon of *Going Down Swinging* confirmed:

> But do we have to keep releasing print issues? There's something we enjoy, the people who work at *GDS* are people who enjoy playing with the physical design and production of print publications. So yeah, I don't think it would change. (personal communication, 5 June 2015)

Thus, while editors' opinions are at the centre of this research, their opinions have been analysed with due acknowledgement of their preferences, and with the goal of understanding how such preferences might be socially and economically construed within the field in the first place.

5.2.3 Editor demographics

Taking into account editors' backgrounds and demographic helps frame their judgements and decisions about media use and communicating literary value. Of the nine editors who participated in the study, seven were male and two were female. All were white, middle-class, and university-educated, and some held important positions in academia. In demographic terms, there was little diversity among these editors, which necessarily skews interview data to favour a traditional viewpoint, along with influencing the flavour of Australian literary journals themselves.[21] Beyond this skewing, it is possible to infer that editors of Australian literary journals draw their readers and writers from a similar, often overlapping, cohort, and that all these stakeholders might share similar ideas about literary value, materiality, and the role literary journals should play in Australian publishing. Given

[21] While there are two multicultural literary journals in Australia—*Mascara* (which publishes the work of contemporary migrant, Asian–Australian and Indigenous writers) and *Peril* (which focuses on Asian–Australian arts and culture)—I was unable to secure an interview with their editors.

the attitudes and assumptions that many editors expressed in their interviews, it is also possible to surmise that conventions about print's value in the literary journal field are fairly set, and tied to editors' experience and backgrounds.

While there is no way to discover how literary journals' materiality might be affected by greater diversity among the editor cohort in the current climate, where a broad spectrum of difference *was* observed—in editors' ages—a surprising range of attitudes surfaced. Such a phenomenon demonstrates that diversity yields difference, and although it is hard to predict *how* the attitudes in the field might vary were it to draw editors from diverse backgrounds, it seems safe to assume that differences would arise.

Editors' ages ranged from their early twenties to mid-sixties, and the researcher had made some assumptions on their use of media according to their time of life. This is partly because she assumed that, as 'digital natives'[22] used to the convergence of different media, younger editors such as Sam Cooney of *The Lifted Brow* and Bronte Coates of *Stilts* would be more 'agnostic' about their use of media, but this was not at all the case. In fact, one of the oldest participants, Ivor Indyk—in his sixties—was the most enthusiastic proponent of digital publishing, and David Brooks, also in his sixties, although associated with a conservative magazine, seemed more influenced by the aesthetic qualities of print and digital than by any prejudice against the newer form.

Interestingly, older editors such as Indyk and Kent MacCarter of *Cordite Poetry Review* saw digital and print as mutually beneficial—as Indyk said, 'I don't think the two are exclusive' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). By contrast, younger editors such as Coates of *Stilts* and Cooney of *The Lifted Brow* (generally named as the most innovative journal) were both passionate about the print medium and typically had a more clearly delineated preference for it. As Cooney explained,

> The print magazine will always be the flagship product or representation of whatever … our organisation is. Everything else is extra in the end and fine and extra but … if something is interfering or dragging too much away from the print magazine, then it's probably got to go in the end. (personal communication, 5 May 2015)

It is difficult to hypothesise as to why this different attitude between more experienced and younger editors might have developed—but Indyk, as editor of a digital journal, had a

[22] The term was first coined by Mark Prensky in 2001, but since then, commentary and cultural perceptions of 'millennials' and 'generation Y' have perpetuated the assumption that, for those born into the digital age, boundaries between the digital and material world are porous and even invisible (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b).

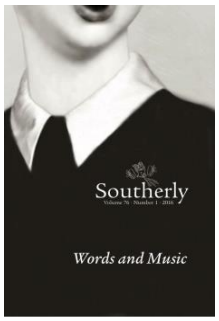
long history publishing in print, so had time and experience against which to draw comparisons. He described, for example, the disheartening sight of warehouses full of unsold journal copies:

> Just the sheer accumulation of these unsold copies, it's so profoundly depressing. So that's why I felt, you know, that it wasn't economical really, in terms of one's energy or in terms of financially, either, or ecologically for that matter. So it just seemed to be a compelling argument to go online, really. (I. Indyk, personal communication, 11 June 2015)

One explanation for the relative popularity of print with younger editors could be the development of different material literacies for different demographic groups, with youth cultures such as the urban hipster movement, as Schiermer (2014) says, 'intensely devoted to redeeming the objects of the former generation' (p. 168). Just as vinyl records have become popular in the age of the MP3, those who have grown up with digital publishing might be more attracted to the material qualities of print because they represent a counterpoint to the digital, contemporary mainstream.

5.3 PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR PUBLICATIONS

5.3.1 *Southerly* (David Brooks)

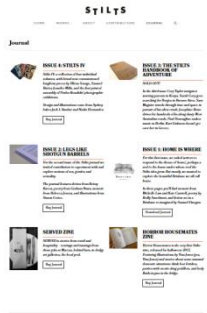


Southerly is the oldest literary journal in Australia. Founded in 1939, it is edited by David Brooks and Elizabeth McMahon, and has long been associated with the English department of the University of Sydney, where it is housed. Regarded as conservative and resistant to change by some of the editors who participated in this study, *Southerly* has nonetheless published in digital form at *The Long Paddock* for several years, hosting guest bloggers and publishing content thought fit for the web. Brooks, who is also a noted poet, academic, and Miles Franklin-shortlisted author with a high position in the field, was available for an interview, although Elizabeth McMahon declined to participate in the study. *Southerly* is supported by the Australia Council and Arts NSW.

Being the oldest literary journal in Australia is both a blessing and a curse for *Southerly*—and for the same reason. As the oldest literary journal, it is frequently assumed, and perhaps this is true, that the journal's funding is guaranteed by virtue of its history and tradition. *Southerly* has been the subject of some reproach in recent years, described as 'staid' and 'conservative' (Bradley, 2009), and the interview with Brooks began with a slight defensiveness, as if he expected criticism from the researcher regarding the journal's web presence. Brooks emphasised the importance of continually renovating the journal, even while it observes its traditional place as a publisher and observer of new Australian literature (personal communication, 11 June 2015).

Like many editors, Brooks was brutally honest about what he saw as the difficulties of working as a literary journal editor. Brooks described the role as 'absolutely effing thankless' and some writers as 'children who have to be dealt with carefully'. He had clearly been frustrated by the wishes of certain writers who refused to be published in digital form, preferring their work to appear in print—although, at the same time, he said, some writers actually contact him requesting to be published in digital form 'because they have grown up in a way in a digital mode, and that's their preferred mode' (D. Brooks, personal communication, 11 June 2015).

5.3.2 *Stilts* (Bronte Coates)



Stilts was founded in 2011 by a group of students at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane with the aim of telling stories from and of that city. A small journal that has no ongoing funding and relies instead on cover sales and donations, *Stilts* has been on hold since 2014 because its editors left Brisbane and found other roles in the literary field—one, Katia Pase, is now editor of *Going Down Swinging*. In 2015, Bronte Coates, co-founder of the magazine, participated in an interview for this project. A junior member of the literary field, Coates was acutely aware of the difficulties (and contradictions) of running a journal centred on Queensland's capital from other parts of the world, and explained that a

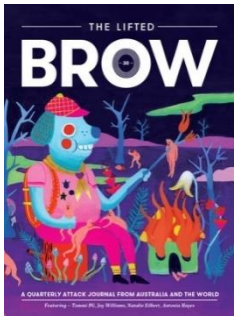
new, Brisbane-based editor, Hayley Stockall, who plans to take the journal online and cease print publication, would be starting work on the journal soon.

Describing itself as a literary 'collective', *Stilts* was always intended to function as more than a magazine, and Coates described the journal as having three specific arms, each with its own editor: events, the website, and the print journal. That said, Coates says the print journal was always more important for the sense of achievement it gave emerging writers, but also for the experience it gave its editors, all of whom had plans to develop careers in publishing or the writing field. Said Coates:

> You don't get a job as, in a publishing house straight out of uni. Like, you have to prove your stripes kind of thing. Like, you've got to have the practical experience too … I know that I definitely got a job largely based on my work with *Stilts*. (personal communication, 27 May 2015) [Coates now works editing the website of well-regarded Melbourne independent bookstore Readings].

According to Coates, editorial decisions about which work belonged in which media were never based on literary value, but rather a sense of what was a better aesthetic fit for each medium. Perhaps a little contradictorily, Coates later said that *Stilts*' key contributor base, emerging writers, would much prefer to be published in print; and, interestingly but not uncommonly, *Stilts* only paid for print contributions, while writers provided content for their website for free. 'It's much more impressive … to say, "Look, I'm published in this,"' said Coates, 'as opposed to, "Go to this website". It's a, it has a different sense of accomplishment attached to it' (personal communication, 27 May 2015).

5.3.3 *The Lifted Brow* (Sam Cooney)



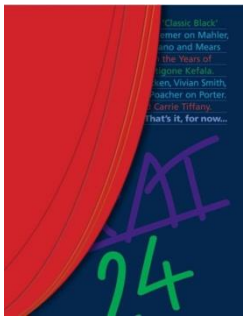
Founded in 2007 by Ronnie Scott and now edited by Sam Cooney, *The Lifted Brow* is one of Australia's newer literary journals, but has already established a strong reputation; the other editors interviewed often referred to it as a publication with energy and promise. Funded by the Australia Council, Copyright Agency, Creative Victoria, and Melbourne City

of Literature, *The Lifted Brow* describes itself as a 'quarterly attack journal' and, like many literary journals today, including *Overland*, *Stilts*, and *Going Down Swinging*, regards itself as far more than a journal—in fact, it calls itself a 'literary organisation' (The Lifted Brow, 2016a). As such, it has a very large masthead, with several editors, and up to a dozen other editorial staff.

When Cooney was interviewed in early 2015, *The Lifted Brow* was divided into three entirely separate entities, each with different staff and publishing different work: a print journal, a digital magazine, and a website. Since then, the digital magazine and the print journal have been effectively merged, and publish the same content—although in digital form, each print journal is split into three parts so that the quarterly is delivered monthly. iPhone users can use an app to access their subscription, which is otherwise accessible via *The Lifted Brow*'s website. At the time of the interview, Cooney revealed that running a separate digital publication, in spite of the opportunities to experiment with form, was simply unwieldy and difficult, and that having a successful print magazine was more important than two moderately successful magazines in two media (personal communication, 5 May 2015).

The interview with Cooney was one of the most surprising undertaken during this research. As a youthful magazine with a correspondingly youthful tone and audience, digital publication could have been both popular and valuable to its editors. Instead, Cooney was perhaps the most enthusiastic proponent of print and of maintaining a print journal than any editor interviewed. He said that the business model, the prestige, the tactility, and the type of engagement demanded of the reader by print made it the preferred medium at *The Lifted Brow*.

5.3.4 *HEAT* (Ivor Indyk)



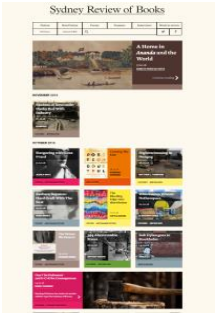
HEAT is the only literary journal included in this study that no longer publishes. However, it was deemed important to the research because, in his final editorial folding the magazine, editor Ivor Indyk discussed precisely the issues of materiality and technology that

this research project has explored, and in such sensitive detail that further investigation was deemed appropriate. Indyk is now the editor of the digital publication the *Sydney Review of Books*, and his thoughts on publishing a digital journal having worked in print were of great value to this research project.

HEAT was founded in 1996 and folded in 2011, publishing during the time that the rise of the internet brought about tumultuous change in Australia's literary journal field. Funded by Western Sydney University and Arts NSW (now Create NSW), *HEAT* published in print and maintained a simple, functional website where some content 'tasters' were published and issues could be ordered. While *HEAT* was very well respected and admired, Indyk has explained that sales and subscription figures were relatively static, and that editing *HEAT* was a stern lesson that 'it is a mistake to think of a community as a market' (Indyk, 2011).

Indyk is one of the more senior members of the Australian literary landscape to participate in the study, and has a lengthy career history as a publisher, writer, critic, and academic. As the Whitlam Chair of Western Sydney University's Writing and Society Research Centre, he holds a respected position in the field and is deeply engaged in issues related to publishing and media interrogated here, both practically and theoretically. Indyk was persuasive in his view that digital publication was, in large part, the most pragmatic media for editors and writers to achieve their aims of reaching an audience. Indyk believes that literary journals were, as miscellanies, perfectly suited to digital media, and that digital publishing allowed them to reclaim the dynamic characteristics that define the form (Indyk, 2011, 2015).

5.3.5 *Sydney Review of Books* (Ivor Indyk)



Ivor Indyk is a board member and founding editor of the *Sydney Review of Books*, which was founded at the Western Sydney University Writing and Society Research Centre in 2013 and is now supported by the Australia Council, Copyright Agency, and the university. When asked why this new publication was founded, rather than reviving *HEAT*, as

Indyk had suggested might be the case, he said it was a combination of following the wishes of his younger colleagues for a new publication, and also responding to a need for serious, critical writing in Australian literature—particularly as review pages in newspapers shrank around the nation.

As a critical and review publication that does not publish fiction or poetry, the *Sydney Review of Books* does not strictly fit this thesis's definition of a literary journal, although it describes itself as 'online journal devoted to long-form literary criticism' (Sydney Review of Books, 2013). Nevertheless, the journal could still be described as a miscellany, publishing a wide range of critical writing, from reviews to essays by a range of writers and with an openness to experimenting with form, especially in the digital medium. As Indyk stated in his interview, 'we've got a couple of critics that are interested in that sort of multimedia presentation for reportage as a literary genre, reportage, because that can incorporate photos and news clips and things like that' (personal communication, 11 June 2015).

5.3.6 *Island* (Matthew Lamb)

Based in Tasmania, *Island* was established in 1979 as *The Tasmanian Review*, but soon changed its name to *Island* to reflect a broader scope and readership throughout Australia and internationally. A 'traditional' literary magazine with a long history, publishing a typical mix of poetry, fiction, and essays, *Island* underwent considerable change under the editorship of Matthew Lamb (between 2013 and 2016), who established a partnership with the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), gained increased funding, and introduced a policy that any writer published in the magazine must also be a subscriber (non-subscribers would have the cost of a subscription deducted from their fee). Lamb's most radical move, however, was to change *Island* from multiplatform publication to print only in 2015, a move that he described in his interview as highly successful.

Lamb himself is outspoken, opinionated, and somewhat conservative in his views. The decision to change to print-only publication was made solely (as he claimed) on the basis of

McLuhan's tetrad of media effects[23]. Although he declared the strategy a success, he did so citing increased print runs rather than actual sales to make his point, and the fact that *Island* was defunded by the Australia Council in early 2016 casts some doubt on his claims—or on the funding body's faith in the journal's strategy. Lamb was most passionate about issues of funding and the way literary journals should or could be run to be more effective and efficient: by increasing accountability, working with one another, retaining talented writers, and so on. Lamb was notably critical of the new writing ecology of writers' centres and university courses that train writers who are yet to become readers—in his view, a serious pedagogical flaw that merely generates poor literature and burdens literary magazines' resources (personal communication, 5 April 2016).

5.3.7 *Review of Australian Fiction* (Matthew Lamb)

Review of Australian Fiction was founded by Matthew Lamb and Phil Crowley in 2013, with Lamb taking on editorial tasks and Crowley administration and web management. Unlike *Island*, also edited by Matthew Lamb, *Review of Australian Fiction* is not a traditional literary journal. It publishes two pieces of short fiction in each edition—one from an established writer and one from an emerging writer. The fiction published in this digital publication, Lamb stressed, can be of nearly any length, thanks to the flexibility of the digital form. Even within the field, *Review of Australian Fiction* is little known. It attracts no outside funding from government or institutions and relies on cover sales.

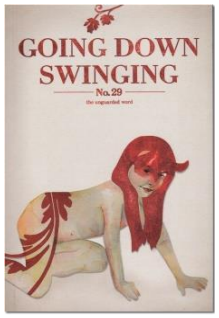
Given Lamb's views on print publication, questions arose about how he could reconcile his views to work in both formats, until he explained that he had, at first, wanted to work in print, but it was unaffordable (personal communication, 5 April 2016). Furthermore, he stated that the digital mode perfectly suited his aims because he wanted authors to be able to produce work without any constraints whatsoever—to explore their story in as many words

[23] A tool proposed by Marshal McLuhan to examine the effects of a medium on society. The tetrad asks: What does the medium enhance? What does the medium make obsolete? What does the medium retrieve that had been obsolesced earlier? What does the medium reverse or flip into when pushed to extremes?

as they felt necessary (M. Lamb, personal communication, 5 April 2016). Further to this, *Review* also publishes work in any genre, from crime to fantasy—a freedom that was also, Lamb explained, welcomed by established writers and popular with readers: 'I've had writers who have written 10 novels', he noted, 'say that their 5,000-, 6,000-word short story was the best fun that they've had writing because it was for the first time they were able to go back to saying this was just about the story' (personal communication, 5 April 2016).

Review survives on no funding and Lamb and Crowley must donate their time to produce it. Lamb is hoping to move on from his position as editor, and suggested that unless the publication makes enough money to support a new editor, it might fold.

5.3.8 *Going Down Swinging* (Geoff Lemon)



Going Down Swinging was founded in 1979 with the intention of encouraging 'openness and experimental thinking' (Going Down Swinging, 2016). Throughout its 37-year history, it has maintained a countercultural bearing, and was one of the first literary journals to publish audio recordings in CD form along with its print publication. *Going Down Swinging* is currently funded by Creative Victoria, the University of Melbourne, and the Copyright Agency.

When interviews were conducted between 2014 and 2015, Geoff Lemon was the sole editor of the journal, but has since stepped back into the role of 'editor mentor', with the publication now edited by Katia Pase (who co-founded *Stilts*, another journal studied in this project), and a group of new staff.

Lemon is a successful sports and opinion writer, and has published articles in *The Guardian* and extensively elsewhere, as well a collection of poetry. As such, Lemon enjoys a respected and independent position within the field. When interviewed, he was open about his frustrations with working virtually unpaid for many years. Throughout his interview, Lemon was frank about the personal and professional frustrations of working on a literary journal, and was highly critical of the limited funding that kept magazines 'drip-fed' but

unable to thrive. He also expressed the view that writers and artists should be paid for their work, but that arts administrators such as editors should not (G. Lemon, personal communication, 5 June 2015).

Going Down Swinging has a long history of publishing in different media, and continues this practice today. It distinguishes itself from many journals through the frequency and importance of its live events, which often feature performance work. According to Lemon and the journal's website, the publication is also notable for its dedication to working closely with writers to develop and edit new work, a process Lemon believed missing from many other journals' practices (personal communication, 5 June 2015).

5.3.9 *Cordite* (Kent MacCarter)

Although it was first established as a print journal in 1997, *Cordite Poetry Review* has appeared exclusively online since 2000, making it an early pioneer of digital-only publication in Australia and around the world.[24] *Cordite* publishes reviews, poetry, essays, and interviews, and offers peer review for academic work. Kent MacCarter, an editor and poet with a quietly respected position in the field, took over as managing editor in 2012, and now *Cordite Poetry Review* is just one arm of Cordite Press Inc., which publishes collections of poetry as limited-edition, print, 'literary artefacts' (Cordite Poetry Review, 2016a). *Cordite* has support from a number of agencies, including Creative Victoria, Arts NSW, the Australia Council, Melbourne City of Literature, and Arts Council New Zealand.

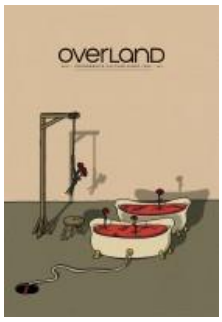
With strong roots in web publication, *Cordite* sees itself as the 'runt of the litter', and is proud of its longevity online (it has been running for 19 years) in spite of limited funding and without the aid of a university base enjoyed by 'bigger' print journals. In the pursuit of new talent, each issue of *Cordite* (although the journal is online, it maintains a print-like quarterly publication schedule) is entirely curated by a guest editor, and publishes up to 70 different

[24] Second only to another poetry publication, John Tranter's *Jacket* magazine, which launched a few months earlier (in 1997) as the first digital literary journal in the world (Tranter, 2012).

artists and writers. *Cordite* also experiments with transmedia, overlapping comics and poetry, and has published small chapbooks to give away. *Cordite* frequently publishes translations of international and foreign-language poetry in English.

In spite of *Cordite*'s long and successful history with web publishing, Kent MacCarter was enthusiastic about the new book publishing arm of Cordite Press Inc., which since 2014 has produced limited-edition collections of poetry with emphasis on design and material beauty. MacCarter has plans to continue and expand the book publishing arm of Cordite Press Inc., with 10 books in print and more in planning.

5.3.10 *Overland* (Jacinda Woodhead)



Overland was founded in 1954, and is one of Australia's oldest and most highly regarded literary magazines. Linked to the Australian Communist Party when it was founded, of all Australia's extant literary journals (with the possible exception of right-wing *Quadrant*), *Overland* has most retained its political character, and still publishes with a strong, left-wing agenda. *Overland* is edited by Jacinda Woodhead, who took over from well-established editor Jeff Sparrow in 2015. Although young and new to the role (and the first female editor of *Overland*), Woodhead has already gained a strong reputation for her editorial and management skills[25].

Overland is based at Victoria University in Melbourne and supported by the Australia Council and several other institutions, including the university, and public funding bodies. It publishes a print journal quarterly and maintains an active website and social media presence, particularly on Facebook. In keeping with its leftist philosophy, everything published in the journal in print is available for free online, a business model that relies on loyalty, or a sense of community, or other incentives to purchasing a subscription to maintain revenue.

[25] Woodhead and *Overland* were commended by editors in interviews, including Kent MacCarter and Sam Cooney.

Other incentives are aimed directly at writers wishing to be published in the journal—*Overland* offers preferential consideration to subscribers submitting work for publication, and discounted entry fees for literary prizes it administers, such as the *Overland* Victoria University Short Story Prize.

To the outside observer, and to many of the literary journal editors interviewed for this project, *Overland* seems to be one of the more robust, successful publications in the field today. Woodhead, in her interview, was highly engaged with the timing, aesthetics, and cultures of both web and print publishing, and was clearly receptive to change, adopting a dynamic approach to the journal's use of different media.

5.3.11 *The Canary Press* (Robert Skinner)

Robert Skinner of *The Canary Press* was unable to participate in a phone interview during the data collection phase of the PhD, but kindly responded to a shortened list of questions via email. Based in Melbourne, *The Canary Press* holds itself apart from the rest of the literary journal field in Australia, describing itself as a 'story magazine' rather than a literary one, and Skinner says the journal focuses on readers' enjoyment more than ideas of contributing to a literary culture or archive (Taylor, 2015).

The Canary Press is relatively new—it was founded in 2013. Since then, it has gained support from the Literature Board of the Australia Council and reached its 10th issue, publishing regularly. With funding, its staff has grown dramatically in all areas: editorial, administration, and marketing. The journal's sales have grown, too, and a publication that was once only available in selected bookshops can now be found in newsagents and stores throughout Australia (The Canary Press, 2016).

The Canary Press is focused on encouraging Australians to read short fiction. Says Skinner (2013), 'I don't want to fight over the present-day readers of Australian literature (which, as you suggest, is a small pond indeed). I want to create new ones'. Skinner was thus the editor most critical of the idea that literary magazines should exist as a place for writers to

publish their work. *The Canary Press*'s print-only strategy, Skinner said, was directly related to this aim of 'carving out a space' for fiction to be read. While acknowledging that the internet '*is* pretty great at a lot of stuff', Skinner said that, in our distracted lives, the quiet space created by print publication was suited to short fiction and the 'inherent quality of the thing we are making'. Like many editors, Skinner found the internet to be a noisy place, not necessarily suited to deep reading and quiet contemplation (personal communication, 23 March 2016).

5.4 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.4.1 Purpose and media use—illuminating tensions

One of the most interesting tensions that arises from the interviews is when editors' use of different media is analysed in relation to the stated purposes of their journals. Here, inconsistency is apparent in editors' use of media to achieve their goals. The majority of interview participants expressed some form of preference for the printed form, even if digital publication might present a more practical means of reaching readers. Although Indyk, the most 'pro-digital' editor to be interviewed, suggested that digital form enriches the Australian literary journal, enhancing rather than diminishing its potential, his opinions were outliers (I. Indyk, personal communication, 11 June 2015). The majority of editors were at pains to highlight the value of print, in spite of the constraints it placed upon them when they strove to reach a broader audience, or democratise access to new Australian writing. In spite these goals to reach broader readerships, most editors continue to value and use print, a medium less capable of gathering large numbers of readers. This indicates that editors' use of different media responds to diverse motivations and constraints, some of which lie concealed in the habitus, the culture, of the field. The following analysis presents both economic and practical, as well as aesthetic and social, explanations for editors' choices regarding media and its materialities.

In reaching such explanations, it is first necessary to explore editors' media choices in more detail. While Indyk's observations about the usefulness of digital publishing for literary journals ring true and seem to align digital publication with the goals outlined by literary journal editors, many interview participants seemed, paradoxically, wedded to print—in spite of their awareness of the expense and labour involved, as Brooks described:

> The digital stuff is very inexpensive in one sense, to produce, you know? One person can edit and typeset and put up, you know, i.e. publish, whereas a literary journal

> takes half a dozen people and that's not including the printer. The same stuff: the print copy is much harder to produce, and more expensive to produce. (personal communication, 11 June 2015)

Most journals—whether print only, multiplatform, or digital—seem to place higher value on the printed, embodied form, and even those with long histories of only publishing online, such as *Cordite*, are branching out into print. Woodhead hinted at the contradiction in editors' use of media, describing the discrepancy between time devoted to print publishing relative to digital work: 'sometimes it does feel weird to think about how much effort goes into the print magazine I must say' (personal communication, 15 June 2015). If digital publication can service the needs of a literary journal more cheaply and effectively than print, but print is still favoured, it follows that a hidden dialogic of value is embedded in the materiality of the printed form and is active in literary journal editors' decisions. Where this thesis asks what role materiality plays in Australian literary journal, it emerges that materiality is used to communicate a sense of literary value, to connect the digital present with a sense of literary tradition, and to bind communities that surround journals together.

In examining this 'hierarchy of media', it is necessary to note that journals publishing in print and digital only still overlap their media use, so that they are truly 'post-digital' in nature. The sense of media hierarchy, therefore, is not unique to multiplatform publications: the two operational print-only journals participating in the study maintain social media presences and websites, and all web-only editors were involved in print publication. For example, both *Cordite* and the *Sydney Review of Books* were actively seeking out print publishing opportunities alongside their digital journals. This models Cramer's (2015) definition of the 'post-digital' mediascape: rather than breaking from analogue to digital, the 'post-digital' is a 'messy state of media, arts and design *after* their digitisation' (p. 19) and where old and new decisions are based more on which media is better for the job at hand than on questions of old versus new.

Several journals in the Australian literary field exist as online-only publications; of the three explored for this study, all editors discussed the intermediating effects of print in positive terms despite their work in digital (further discussed in the following analysis). This supports the view that materiality plays a role in communicating value, or is itself valued for properties specific to the medium. For example, Lamb, as editor of the *Review of Australian Fiction*, revealed that he had wanted to publish his journal in print, but had chosen digital because he could not afford production costs: 'We actually really wanted to do *RAF* in print

and just logistically we couldn't do it. So we thought we'd try the digital thing', he said (personal communication, 5 April 2016). Equally telling is the fact that both *Cordite* and the *Sydney Review of Books* were actively seeking out print publishing opportunities alongside their digital journals, intending to collect works and publish them in book form. Their editors' comments suggest that even when a journal is removed from the economic and institutional advantages or influences that print publication might bestow, the medium still holds some appeal based on its capacity to communicate messages about value and literary tradition.

5.5 ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS

In asking about the role materiality plays in the literary journal field, why print and digital seem to be valued differently, and how literary journal editors use different media, it is necessary to interrogate the practical and economic reasons behind choices on how print and digital are used. While in interviews, editors were inclined to discuss the purposes of their literary journals in an aspirational sense, the field's threatened economic climate demands that, day-to-day, editors take a pragmatic approach to what, when, and how their journals publish—an approach dictated by the economic 'base' on which the culture of the field rests. As a result, some contradictions and frictions between their aspirational, proclaimed purposes and practical media strategies surfaced. These frictions with economic foundations are less tied to literary value, but still carry some of its traces. For example, editors described how funding bodies made up of individuals wielding considerable power in the field and answerable to governments and boards were able to influence (and were influenced *by*) literary journal editors' media use, as this section demonstrates.

Literary value and economic value are also linked in the way editors and stakeholders distributed funds throughout journals, and into different media, with print often favoured. Interviews revealed that writing was treated differently depending on whether it was destined for print or digital publication, but that the source of some of this unequal treatment had economic foundations (which then echoed through the value of works in different media in a literary sense). In every aspect of a literary journal's production—writers' pay, production and editorial turnaround times, design input, editorial feedback—print was given preferential treatment, indicating its capacity to communicate an intermingling economic and literary value through its material qualities.

5.5.1 The 'hidden labour' of the internet

This preferential handling of print might be (in part) indirectly imposed by funding models. In their daily work, editors are largely concerned with maintaining or growing subscriptions and sales—one of the key criteria that funding bodies assess in grant applications—and other administrative tasks that ensure the security of schedules and finances. As Cooney said, 'I wish I didn't have to be this interested in it but I have to be focusing on making sure we have enough money' (personal communication, 5 May 2015). For many print and multiplatform journals, print publication is essential for both attracting funding and maintaining an income, such as it is. Generally, editors believed that having a print issue had some bearing on a journal's capacity to attract funding from fickle and changeable committees, as Brooks observed:

> We put print copies of the journal on the table in front of the funding bodies, the people in their committees, and it has an effect that the digital doesn't have. So there's a kind of paradox there isn't there? You know, that we actually play upon the power of the board, and their own deeper unacknowledged prejudices to actually keep some sort of funding going. (personal communication, 11 June 2015)

More overtly, when discussing online-only poetry journal *Cordite*, Woodhead said, 'I know that they often find it difficult to attract funding because they don't have a print magazine' (personal communication, 15 June 2015). This synergy with David Brooks's suggestion that funding bodies harbour 'deeper unacknowledged prejudices' (personal communication, 11 June 2015) favouring print provides further evidence that print conveys specific meaning in the Australian literary field. Since funding bodies' assessment is typically based on some calculation of excellence and merit,[26] it follows that print is a preferred means of communicating such literary value.

Editors have limited flexibility in how they spend their grant money, and typically, that money does not cover production and distribution costs—the bulk of it goes towards paying writers and contributors, as well as covering tangible, material expenses. This limits the money and time editors *could* spend on online content, and for publications that choose to work in two media, costs are doubled. Furthermore, as Woodhead said in her interview, there is a perception among supporters of literary journals that online publishing is cheap:

[26] For a useful discussion of the role of 'excellence' in determining Australian arts funding, see Ben Eltham's 2015 'The excellence criterion'.

> That you don't need those resources and you don't need the staff and you don't need to pay writers as much—which is just extraordinary really—to think that you don't need an infrastructure for publishing [online] … I think it's because their labour is hidden. (personal communication, 15 June 2015)

Interviews revealed that calls to send literary journals online to save money on production costs are misguided. Not only are websites expensive, but the current business model of selling print subscriptions persists because it is robust and relatively profitable rather than simply traditional or atavistic. Many editors attested to the difficulty of selling subscriptions to web editions of their journals. Of the three web-only journals that participated in the study, two were completely free and the other—*Review of Australian Fiction*—was threatened with folding due to substantial financial difficulty because, as Lamb said 'nobody's buying it'. Digital media, he said, 'has created the assumption of getting stuff for free. And the production costs are still there' (personal communucation, 5 April 2016). Making money through digital models, which are also time-consuming and labour-intensive to maintain, seems a distant, if not impossible, prospect for Australian literary journals.

5.5.2 The market of exchange

Some of editors' decisions about media use are pragmatic, although still demonstrate the relationship between print and literary value in the field. Literary journals rely on the symbolic power of the physical object in a market of exchange that has traditionally depended on commodity fetishism: economic relationships based on the trade of *things*. Many editors stated that the literary market resists paying for digital content, and digital's lower economic value leads to higher investment in the printed form, simultaneously augmenting its perceived cultural value. Woodhead pointed out that *Overland* is economically reliant on its printed form, adding:

> [Print is] important for a couple of reasons … people subscribe to the print journal. And I think there's still an expectation when you subscribe to a magazine that you receive something in return. And at the moment even though we have this online publication and we have events where we have other online publications, there's actually that print magazine that is funding the entire *Overland* project. That's what people subscribe to. (personal communication, 15 June 2015)

If, in return for their money, subscribers would prefer to receive a tangible object, it makes sense for editors to invest in the material value of the media, even as this perpetuates a cycle of value captured by print.

The power that print's material qualities hold in this market of exchange is revealed in the fact that print subscriptions are favoured even when a digital alternative (of exactly the same content) is offered at enormously cheaper prices. One might anticipate that digital versions of journals would sell more copies because they are less expensive, but literary journal editors actually attested to finding selling digital editions more difficult, as Cooney said:

> Logically we understand that a digital magazine should have value and all that … equal value to a print magazine if it's the same content. Yet digital magazines are often a quarter of the price or less, but even then people get suspicious, whereas you give them something they're much more likely to hand over their money, or hand over their time, or whatever it is. I don't know what it is, people just don't … they might logically and rationally understand a digital magazine is something valuable but they don't get it. (personal communication, 5 May 2015)

In addition to economic limitations imposed by funding bodies (whether directly or indirectly), several editors believed that readers' expectations prevented them from investing in digital content—if readers would not pay for it, they argued, then they could not reinvest in it. As Coates pointed out:

> We're so used to digital content being free, but it's actually, a lot of the time, for really great digital content, you've got to work on it and spend time on it, and … [we] couldn't afford it because we know that we wouldn't get people paying for the content, kind of thing. Like, you expect the internet to be free. (personal communication, 27 May 2015)

Coates was not alone in her assertion that online reading and consumption culture play a part in editors' negotiations with different media, and the role materiality occupies in the field. In discussing why a material object might have greater economic value than its digital equivalent, Lemon explained:

> So much good stuff online is free. You know, you can iView everything and you can pirate everything, and there's just such a vast raft of stuff that's available for free out there. It's like, why would anyone bother … buying access to a digital edition of a magazine, when you don't even really understand what it is? (personal communication, 5 June 2015)

Lemon's frustration with selling digital journals was such that he explained it was really only for the sake of contributors that he maintains a cover price on his digital editions:

> In terms of the money we could make out of selling it versus not bothering with the hassle, we'd almost prefer not to sell them. But there's a, you know, as the prime minister would say, a 'price signal', which indicates that, you know, if you're giving the work away for free, you're kind of disrespecting the people who put in all the effort to make the work that's in it. (personal communication, 5 June 2015)

Lemon's introduction of the 'price signal' idea is significant, because it confirms that economic value is used—by the literary journal editors, readers, writers, and funding bodies discussed above—as a language for expressing literary value and as a means of indicating that, when a work is made manifest in the world (published), investment of financial capital, time, and material resources can be exchanged for cultural capital in the form of literary value. Where the economics of literary journals are concerned, factors such as funding bodies' preferences and edicts about the distribution of funds, as well as the value of material objects in the exchange market, have contributed to a higher economic value for the print version of a literary journal that manifests in an expression of greater literary value communicated through the material qualities of the medium.

5.6 POWER AND THE MATERIALITY OF PRINT

If print's value to the literary journal field has, as this analysis demonstrates, an economic foundation that extends to the field's habitus and culture, it follows that some of its dominance might be traced through the veins of power and the struggle to acquire and maintain it. As the publishing industry spans both an artistic, literary field and a market for consumer goods, power might be situated both in the accumulation of cultural capital, as Bourdieu would have it, or in the control of the economy, after Marx. Any material change to the way different media are funded, or the way digital media are regarded in terms of literary value, could diminish or even threaten the field's fragile power dynamics. Editors of literary journals, as well as the individuals and governments behind funding bodies, have some interest in perpetuating their control over the flow of cultural capital and economic capital in the literary journal field in traditional media, as the following exploration of interview data demonstrates.

5.6.1 Literary journal editors and power

An investigation of power in the field calls for a brief digression into the role editors' personal goals play in choices they make about media for their journals. In her essay on Australian literary journals, Alice Grundy points out that it is rarely acknowledged that

journals act as ‘training grounds for editors, as well as writers’ (Grundy, 2014), and that creating and maintaining journals in print could be, in part, related to a desire to practise proofreading, editing, and ‘curating’ print books and journals. Hamilton (2013) agrees—far from evidence of a ‘print rebellion’, she writes, young editors’ desire to ‘curate’ print magazines is tied to their roots in digital culture, and is a way to hone and develop their digital skills in material practice (pp. 52–53). Editors’ personal desire to interact with the haptic qualities of print adds to the sense of literary value associated with the medium in the literary journal field.

From a theoretical perspective, the fact that editors frequently defer to the aura of printed goods when discussing their value can reveal some insight into the fragile dynamics of power in the literary journal field. According to Marx, the ‘mystical character’ (Marx, Paul, & Paul, 1972) or fetish value of commodities obscures the social relationships behind their manufacture and exchange—social relationships that, in this case, bestow power on the editor to discover, develop, consecrate, or reject an aspiring artist’s work. For editors, so often left impotent by the caprices of funding bodies and supporting institutions, and subject to criticism from the media and within the field, the use of print could be construed as an effort to reclaim power as the ‘creator of the creator’ described by Bourdieu (1996) in *The rules of art* (p. 168). Key to this power is the ability to print, even in the digital age.

Some reasons editors gave for choosing print have been discussed, but it is significant to note that, according to Bourdieu (1996), the process of ‘making’ is symbolised by making *material*, by a work’s coming into being. Bourdieu (1996) describes this making material as a ‘miracle of transubstantiation’ (p. 291)—a term that reveals the deeply bodily, physical significance of the process of ‘the material *fabrication* of the product’ (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 167). When a piece of writing is ‘transfigured into ‘“creation”’ by the editor–publisher, it becomes a symbol of their capacity to discover and distribute art’ (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 167). As Coates, a young person aspiring to a career in publishing, said, ‘the first few years we did *Stilts*, it was so exciting to be in this culture and creating content. Well, not just content, creating *objects*’ (personal communication, 27 May 2015, my emphasis). Like Latour’s (2012) idea of ‘immutable mobiles’ (p. 7), for literary journal editors, printed editions behave as circulating, unchangeable symbols of their power in the field.

5.6.2 Archiving literature and chance encounters

Materiality also plays a role in communicating editors' creative achievements (in their journals) over time. Key to Latour's idea of 'immutable mobiles' is the movement of objects and their signifying power—forming 'links between different places in time and space' (Latour, 2012, p. 10), and it is interesting to note that editors gave significant thought to the manner in which their journals might be encountered, both now and in the future. In many interviews, editors described their preference for print in terms of its material, physical existence in the world. They believed that, as opposed to digital publication, a print journal's physical existence made it a more durable method of archiving and collecting Australian literature for future generations. As Lamb said, 'online stuff disappears. I mean, if *RAF* closes and nothing hosts the issues that stuff is gone. Whereas I was today looking at back issues of *Island* from 1982. It's there. So [print] does have that durability' (personal communication, 5 April 2016). Editors' concern for the durability and mobility of their printed journals could reflect on their function as symbols of the editors' power, and as tactile, creative expressions of the editors' own artistic work.

In explaining and describing their rationales for print publication, editors often slipped into more sentimental language that revealed an attachment to print beyond the purely archival, and centred on serendipity, on preserving the possibility of accidental encounters with literature in bookshops and libraries—like Lamb's encounter with 1982 copies of *Island*. Speaking as himself a writer, Lemon said:

> You want to physically exist. Because I guess there's the thing that, you know, someone could pick up an old copy of *Southerly* in an op shop in 30 years and your poem's still in it. Whereas whatever website you put it on is probably long dead, you know? ... If someone prints 500 copies of a book and even if half of them get burned and lost or whatever, there'll still be some copies that will exist on a shelf somewhere, or in a box somewhere, that someone might pick up, might flick through, and might read, you know, in 50 years' time. (personal communication, 5 June 2015)

This sentiment, shared by several editors, also reflects that characteristic fragility of each literary journal—no editor was especially confident that their journal would endure beyond the next five or 10 years; and because a website is shut down once its hosting fees are no longer paid, editors' fear that their work, and that of their contributors, could be lost forever if it were not published in print is perfectly legitimate.

Apart from acting as durable symbols of editors' power, circulating through time and space, the printed literary journal also represents the opportunity for serendipitous discovery by readers. Discussion of encounters in op shops and libraries, now and in future, revealed an idealised potential audience for literary journals: an as-yet-unreached, ever-receptive, curious reader whose encounter with a literary journal would be, equally, a discovery (and a success) for the editor. It would appear that, in print, editors felt their journal had more power to be discovered, and thus to convert curious browsers (who also exist in abundance online) into readers. This projection by some literary journal editors suggests, in small part, a drive to communicate with readers through the material qualities of print and in the physical realm that operates in literary journals' reincarnation as 'art objects' in the 'post-digital' publishing ecology.

5.7 MAKING MEANING THROUGH MEDIA

As a result of the intermingling of economic and literary value in the literary journal field, along with an emphasis on the editor's creative power, literary journals are being refashioned as fetishistic 'art objects' that symbolise literary and economic value. The following sections address some of the strategies editors use to harness the language of materiality to demonstrate their journals' value to readers and the literary community. Before analysing literary journals and their readerships, it is necessary to pause and consider how editors regard their own readerships and literary journal communities, particularly in response to criticisms of their limited popular appeal.

For the most part, the editors seemed to accept the fact that their publications had small audiences, and for some, mirroring Bourdieu's notion of the anti-market, this provoked a sense of exclusivity and offered evidence of literary value. Lemon was eager to point out that the differences between a literary journal and popular entertainment made small readerships inevitable: 'I don't think we can sit here and sulk and say, "Oh it's …" you know, "Why are people so uncultured? Why do they like football and not like reading this anthology of poetry that I've assembled?" You know?' (personal communication, 5 June 2015). At the same time, however, literary journals such as *The Lifted Brow* and *Going Down Swinging* regularly host successful, lively, and profitable events, demonstrating the genuine sense of community that surrounds them.

While literary events could be popular and profitable, Indyk observed in an editorial that generating a sense of community does not guarantee a market for a publication, a mistake

he claims to have made with *HEAT* (Indyk, 2011). While many people support literary journals—writers, academics, critics, and readers—funding bodies' criteria call for some evidence of success, which, for literary journals (at least today), means evidence of a market in cover sales and page visits.

It could be argued, therefore, that literary journals in Australia have a public, but not a readership. Here, a public might be construed as a group of supporters and proponents of an idea, an ideal—as Warner would have it 'a space of discourse organised by nothing other than discourse itself' (Warner, 2002b, p. 50). Indyk made the powerful suggestion in his interview that the literary journal exists in a realm of 'virtual reality', in that the literary field can agree on literary journals being a good thing, a necessary thing; but few people are interested in reading them. While, after Bourdieu, this might augment journals' cultural capital, it also creates friction between the expectations of funding bodies and commentators, and the literary goals of editors and writers who contribute to them. This friction is frequently played out in material terms, as editors try to exploit the language of materiality to express literary value, as well as trying to respond to economic pressure to increase cover sales, subscriptions, and page visits.

5.7.1 'Thingiest things': Print and aura

In considering how literary value might be read through the material qualities of the print medium, yet still related to the economics of the field, it is useful to question a recent emphasis on the material qualities of the print medium in literary journals. In an interview with the *Mississippi Review* about his US publication *McSweeney's* (famous for its fetishistic objectification of the print object), editor Eli Horowitz said, 'we're making a thing, so we need to make the thingiest thing possible' (Rosser et al., 2008, p. 41). In working within the constraints of the economics of publishing and dependence on funding, editors take advantage of material literacies that, through the intermediation process, have become rooted in the habitus of the literary field.[27] It would appear that since digital publication now offers an alternative to print publication, print's position as counterpoint to digital is being

[27] Eltham, for example, says that '*Meanjin* is just the sort of high-value, niche artefact that should be ideally placed to survive and thrive in the new publishing landscape, as the successful efforts of niche publishers like *McSweeney's* in America and *The Lifted Brow* in Australia demonstrate' (Eltham, 2010), and Bradley writes that 'Part of a larger transformation of the material culture of the physical book that is being driven by its displacement by the virtual, it is a process that has been most fully realised in Dave Eggers's gloriously mutable journal *McSweeney's*, which has been, among other incarnations, a box, a pile of mail and a collection of eight illustrated books' (Bradley, 2009).

exploited, and a symbolic, ritualistic, auratic power is, consequently, situated in the printed form.

5.7.2 The analogue work in the digital age

Working at the intersection of economic and symbolic value in literary journals, editors are making print magazines fetishistic objects by emphasising print's material qualities. In an effort to capitalise on or increase their economic value, and particularly to indicate the literary value of the artworks published within, print's materiality is emphasised and exaggerated. This interplay between economic and cultural value can be read through another of Lemon's statements, which echoed many editors' responses. He explained that *Going Down Swinging* could justify the $10,000 to $15,000 cost of printing (which he described as 'a massive investment, we don't spend that kind of money on anything else, ever') by making each journal 'physically compelling' (personal communication, 5 June 2015). He explained:

> We've worked really closely with a couple of really talented designers the last few years to make books that are really engaging objects in their own right, you know? That are pleasurable to handle, you know, that are inventive, that are creative, that do interesting and different things with the kind of inks you use, and the kind of paper stock, the way it's bound and presented. That's important, because I think if you just, if you're just using print as a transmission medium, then there really isn't necessarily much more value to doing than to doing it electronically. (personal communication, 5 June 2015)

Similarly, Indyk described an increasing interest in books as objects, even as he believed the future of publishing belonged online: 'I still believe in the book as an object', he said, 'but it's more and more fetishistic, I think, for me. More and more like a sculpture or a work of art, something like that' (personall communication, 11 June 2015).

The interviews yielded considerable evidence that this increased fetishism of the print object is related to the intermingling of print and digital publishing, and the ensuing intermediation between print and digital forms. Brooks noted that 'the digital has *freed up* print journals to some extent', such that journals are 'more concerned with and more happy to be trying to find ways of including illustrations and … a sense of page design and a sense of the, sort of, beauty and aesthetic of the actual presentation of the paragraph' and 'verbal images' that are difficult to recreate in digital media—which, as Brooks says 'tend to reduce the paragraph to, you know, to look like, well, just so much text' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). Such attitudes demonstrate that materiality can be used to gain a sense of

agency in what Cramer (2015) calls the 'techno-political and economic realities of our time' (p. 25). In Cramer's 'post-digital' era, the malleability of analogue media's material qualities give the illusion of greater control over creative outputs like literary journals, investing the print medium, however justifiably, with a sense of literary value (Cramer, 2015, p. 25).

Apart from control over creative output, the editors regarded print as a richer transmission medium purely because of its material qualities, which are increasingly exaggerated and emphasised in literary journal production. Scholars have recently applied Benjamin's (1936) concepts of 'aura', of iconicity, and of ritual from *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (1936) to examine how mechanically reproduced media (i.e. print) contribute to the perceived value of work produced in the age of *digital* reproduction (Adler, 2012; Bartmanski & Woodward, 2015). These scholars argue that 'analogue' work now has the aura that an original work of art was said to have in the mechanical age. Print has assumed the many contradictions in this power—not least that literary journals are produced by computer and printed on digital printers. Still, the rise of digital publication has contributed to a new material literacy of print. Reincarnated as an art object, print indicates the reverent attitude readers should adopt, guiding them across a threshold into aesthetic appreciation even before they have opened the journal.

John Naughton (2014) identifies one source of this phenomenon when describing the relationship computers and the internet has with copying. While computers are not designed to create copies, they function by doing so, as does the internet (Naughton, 2014, p. 195). The copyright problems that have faced the music, television, film, and book industries all arose due to the capacity of the digital to create infinite perfect copies of an original—even if 'the most perfect' replication were, as Benjamin (1936) points out, lacking the original's 'presence in time and space' (n.p.). In the analogue era, copies were not necessarily the same quality, nor identical, giving them their own 'presence in time and space'; their own aura. Digital reproduction adds another layer to the reproductive hierarchy in creative enterprises that reflects value back into the analogue form. It is precisely the imperfection and minor inconsistencies in the analogue (print) form that now gives the sense of being in the 'presence of the original' so important to Benjamin's (1936) concept of 'authenticity'.

5.8 MEDIA HIERARCHY AND MATERIAL LITERACIES

The economic and cultural factors outlined in this chapter indicate a phenomenon in the Australian literary journal field—when it is viewed from editors' perspectives—favouring

print that could be called a 'hierarchy of media'. Apart from economic and cultural or symbolic properties, this hierarchy is also defined by what editors see as the characteristics of reading in different media, and the capacity of different media to communicate meaning: the material literacies of print and digital publishing. At the level of the work, editors match the properties of different forms and genres to the material properties of different media to make meaning. Although the interviewed editors had clear criteria for which type of writing worked best in different media, print, again, emerged at the top of this hierarchy of 'meaning-making'. In this case, where the material literacies of different media are considered, print's 'superiority' surfaces as a counterpoint to the kind of reading experience digital publication is said to offer. Many editors (although not all) characterised digital reading as distracting and superficial because it was networked, intermingled with our work and social lives, with gaming and shopping. Print, in contrast, was perceived as physically *bound*, contained by its material and physical manifestation, encouraging deeper reading and engagement with the text.

5.8.1 Digital literacies: Cross-referencing and searching

It is necessary to consider that while a 'hierarchy of media' emerges through this research, it responds to the majority of voices and actions of editors in the literary journal field, rather than representing the field as a whole[28]. Editors such as Coates, Woodhead, Indyk, and Brooks all claimed that perceived value had little or no bearing on their choice to publish a work in print or digitally. That said, the manner in which their publications *treated* works destined for different media certainly favoured print. Writers at *Overland*, for example, receive more pay and more editorial feedback for work destined for print, with such practices common across most journals. This indicates the cultural and economic influences on materiality at work in the field.

In many cases, work is published in different media based on its themes and form, matched to the material language of print or digital publication. Several editors, including Woodhead of *Overland*, Brooks of *Southerly*, Indyk of *Sydney Review of Books*, Lemon of *Going Down Swinging*, and Cooney of *The Lifted Brow* all discussed clear criteria for the type of work they found suitable for online publication and print publication. Many editors suggested that non-fiction pieces, such as reviews, opinion pieces, and essays worked online, as did poetry, but that fiction—especially short fiction—was better suited to print.

[28] This is explored in more detail in chapter six's textual analysis, which re-examines the 'hierarchy of media' from the perspective of the reader.

Connecting reviews, or topical, or critical works with digital publication was tied to the medium's immaterial qualities of discoverability, shareablility, or accessibility, or capacity to host discussion on social media.

Indyk was the strongest supporter of digital publishing for literary journals. Working for the non-fiction publication *Sydney Review of Books*, Indyk discussed digital publishing's capacity to function as a living, searchable archive, at least for the medium term, through the 'simultaneity of back issue and contemporary issue' (personal communication, 11 June 2015), particularly where non-fiction and critical work was concerned. He explained:

> With an online publication, the back issues, or the back postings, are readily available, I mean, they're simultaneously present, you know? With the latest offerings. So that's really important for criticism … if it's a good book, and keeps getting referred to and keeps getting set for university courses, then you know, the interest in the criticism about it will persist, and online publication's perfect for that, because it has both an archival and a contemporary function' (personal communication, 11 June 2015)

Brooks of *Southerly* agreed, stating that 'there's a lot more comfort in cross-referencing digitally, you know, putting links into the work if it's a review, for example' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). It is important to note that while print's aesthetic qualities at times dominated discussions in interviews, editors were equally eager to exploit the practical qualities of digital publishing.

5.8.2 Flexibility and freedom

Editors using digital publication were also keen to experiment and discover writing that shook off the material constraints of print. The *Review of Australian Fiction* only launched as a web publication because founders Matthew Lamb and Phil Crowley could not afford to print their new journal—but soon discovered that web publishing had certain attractions for their contributors. Lamb described the power of being able to offer writers free rein when it came to the usual parameters affecting print publishing where a text is curated, bound together, and marketed as a whole. He said:

> We're like, 'You don't have to cut them down just to fit the e-pub'. And no theme. No genre restrictions. We publish literary fiction realist stuff. Speculative fiction. Horror. Sci-Fi. And people are having fun … I actually feel excited that I kind of was able to create this for a writer ... It's good. I think that you can just really focus on the literature. (personal communication, 5 April 2016)

Lemon explained this sense of liberty in the removal of material constraints, saying, 'there's a flexibility to digital, which is important, and which allows a whole new, weird, different range of artistic expression to take place, and that's where I think its importance lies' (personal communication, 5 June 2015).

For Brooks, other material constraints of the print form could be elegantly overcome by digital publication. *Southerly*, like many literary journals, at times illustrates essays and fiction with new artistic work. Brooks explained that, in print, colour illustrations have only ever been awkwardly incorporated because they require a different paper stock that cannot be mixed through the journal binding. Instead, illustrations are generally segregated into sections of pages and referred back to, rather than sitting within a relevant piece of work. In digital, of course, vibrant illustrations can be incorporated at will, and take on new significance and force (D. Brooks, personal communication, 11 June 2015)

While Brooks articulated a strong sense of aesthetic fulfilment as an editor in formulating the 'visual image' in printed form, he was also at pains to point out that the digital offers, as a result, a great deal of freedom—both on the page at a word and sentence level, and in the field itself, such that what he describes as the old 'prison house' of the literary journal is easier to 'break into', with digital publication offering so many more opportunities for writers (personal communication, 11 June 2015). This statements hints at a negative view of the culture of digital publishing and the broader-scale democratisation of content creation, which Clay Shirky (a proponent of digital publishing) has called the 'mass amateurisation of publishing'[29]. Throughout the interviews, it was the culture, rather than the practicalities of digital media consumption, that caused editors particular concern. This could be because it threatens their positions as gatekeepers, but they indicated that the source of their discomfort with some forms of digital writing stemmed rather from the way writers' work was received and appreciated. This is further explored in the below analysis of 'distraction versus immersion'.

The advantages of digital publication identified by editors were, thus, frequently overshadowed by discussions of obverse drawbacks. While Brooks seemed pleased by the 'freedom of the digital', he also raised considerable 'cons', such that writers, finding it easier to be published in this medium, might miss an important phase in their artistic development, and 'think that they're great a lot earlier and don't really, you know, appreciate some of the

[29] This term appears in numerous blogs and books from Shirky, notably *Here comes everybody* (2008).

necessary discipline when it comes to getting something right' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). Brooks also raised an issue that resounded in several interviews: that of 'changes in modes of reading' brought about by digital literacy. As Brooks said,

> There are some people who just, well, a hell of a lot of people, it seems to me, who read very differently and don't read very well these days. Unless they are entertained in a kind of facile way by the text that they're reading, there's a change in modes of discourse that is … we're living in the age of Twitter and so forth, and people are concerned to have just a very, very quick grab at something before their attention span sort of collapses and they need to move on, and that is concerning. (personal communication, 11 June 2015)

This concern echoed through a number of interviews, revealing that editors' decisions are often based on sensitivity to (and beliefs about) reading practices in different media and, underpinning this, a belief that print makes for deeper engagement than digital writing.

5.8.3 Distraction versus immersion

Editors' most powerful and enduring statements supporting the idea of a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print emerged when they discussed print and digital literacies. Many editors characterised digital reading as distracted, while print was described as creating a quiet and contemplative 'space' suited to consuming literary work. Editors based these statements on their own experiences and beliefs, but recent research literature provides some confirmation that information contained within texts is better recalled when readers engage with print. Mangen, Walgermo, & Brønnick (2013), Kerr and Symons (2006), and Singer (2016) all report better recall and comprehension among students reading printed texts over their digital counterparts. Other research also indicates that texts in different media are treated differently, with readers less likely to multitask (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts, 2010) when reading in print, and that multitasking online contributes to more superficial engagement with texts, as readers frequently switch between activities (Liu et al., 2009).

Editors did not comment on the relative literary value of reviews, essays, and other non-fiction (genres that were described as suited to digital publication) as opposed to fiction (described as suited to print). They did, however, comment on the demands these different genres place on the reader, implying that fiction required deeper reading and concentration. Many editors often used physical, spatial language in an effort to describe precisely what properties matched fiction to print publication. For example, Woodhead said, 'there is something about that space and the contemplating kind of space but also just the way the

ideas engage with each other' (personal communication, 15 June 2015). Cooney spoke similarly, describing his print journal as 'grounding', creating a 'bubble', and saying that the

> tangibility of the tactile nature a book does just evoke something in people that tells them this is a time to slow down, this is a time to maybe engage deeply in some way. I don't think you can do that in any way except in print at the moment. (personal communication, 5 May 2015)

The connection of fiction with print was clearly linked to the material properties of that medium—regarded as superior for creating 'space' for serious reading.

While editors regarded digital publication very highly for the fact that it could reach large audiences beyond the usual scope of print distribution models, and could prompt discussion and debate, especially on social media, many alluded to a sense that online reading was a more distracted, less profound experience, just as scholarly work from researchers such as Mangen, Walgermo, & Brønnick (2013), Kerr and Symons (2006), and Singer (2016) appears to indicate. From Woodhead, who simply stated that 'we try not to run long pieces online because people don't engage with them in the same way' (personal communication, 15 June 2015), to Cooney, who described online reading as 'being distracted by 27 browser tabs and email windows and stuff' (personal communication, 5 May 2015), editors revealed that a work's publication media could completely change aesthetic experience of reading and making meaning—something that seemed important to the imaginative and immersive demands of fiction writing. As Skinner said:

> I still think print is far and away the best medium for reading short fiction (or any fiction, for that matter.) People's reading habits online (my own included) are not conducive to the deep reading required to truly appreciate fiction … online is a noisy place to try to peddle the quiet required for good fiction. (personal communication, 23 March 2016)

These comments demonstrate that editors believed that the *physical* nature of printed work actually evoked a different kind of reading from that experienced via screen, and that publishing in print was especially important because it provided an escape from digital media and its prevalence in readers' lives. MacCarter, who publishes the digital poetry journal *Cordite*, spoke of the journal's new print arm creating 'tactile objects' as the 'antithesis of web publishing in a way' (personal communication, 2015). Increasingly, it seems, editors see their journals as protected spaces for the contemplation and appreciation of 'literature', away from the noise and distraction of the internet.

Having editors' reasons for favouring print where reading in different media is concerned, it is necessary to examine editors' motivations in maintaining such a protected 'space', and the sources of anxiety about digital literacies. This is particularly relevant because these publications furnish editors with a certain degree of power within the field, as 'gatekeepers' who decide what work is worthy, and unworthy, of publication.

5.9 CONCLUSIONS

The interviews indicate that editors' material decisions are influenced by a range of cultural and economic forces. Whether in print or online, maintaining funding is an ongoing, vexing, and complex problem for Australian literary journal editors, and one that, discussed throughout this chapter, has significant bearing on their materiality. The problem arises because, whether they sell 2,000 copies of a print journal or attract 250,000 unique page visits, literary journals in Australia are not popular enough to support themselves on sales revenue and rarely attract readerships sufficient to sustain their operations. Many of the questions around the use of different media in literary journals reflect the fact that, as commercial enterprises and regardless of tradition and reputation, literary journals cannot support themselves. With economic considerations having such bearing, it is important to note that based on editors' interview statements, calls to send literary journals online to save money on production costs are misguided. Not only are websites expensive, but the current business model of selling print subscriptions persists because it is robust and relatively profitable rather than simply traditional or atavistic.

As 'post-digital' publications, editors' decisions about media use were based on which medium might better fit the content to be published, with certain genres and forms deemed better suited to digital publication, and others to print. That said, print's capacity to communicate literary qualities through its materiality made it the favoured medium in many instances, so that a 'hierarchy of media' could be said to guide decisions in the literary journal field. Economic matters aside, communicating literary value plays a role in editors' decisions regarding media, with print apparently conveying a sense of literary weight, and perceived as a protected space, away from the noise and distraction of the online environment. This sense of value attributed to print stemmed from editors' personal preferences for that medium, whether for its auratic and tangible properties, or for its capacity to convey editors' power and achievement by embodying their own creations. Furthermore, the fact that print represents a counterpoint to the 'technoconsumerist' online world is an

example of intermediation that has, since the arrival of digital media, refocused attention on the bounded nature of print reading.

This interview data reveals the complexity of editors' media choices—intricate negotiations between economics, literary value, and power, and influenced by funding challenges and a changing readership. Given this landscape, it is surprising to note that the reader was largely absent from many conversations with editors (despite questions inviting them to reflect on their communities), who gave writers more time in discussions than their key audience and economic driver. The input readers' preferences may have had in the decisions literary journal editors make regarding materiality were not fully uncovered by this research.

In seeking to further respond to questions about the role of materiality in the literary journal field, textual analysis provides an opportunity to test editors' statements at the interface of readers, writers, and editors.

Chapter 6: Text, Materiality, and Value—Textual Analysis

Chapter four's contextual review provides a map of the ways the literary journal field has reconfigured and absorbed new technologies and processes, reaching a point in its history characterised by change, challenges, and the integration of many publishing technologies into a 'post-digital' ecology.[30] The contextual review outlines the multifaceted role played by materiality in the literary journal field, and focuses on the ways that value is reflected by and communicated through the print medium in the contemporary literary journal publishing landscape. These trends were explored through interviews with editors, analysed in chapter five, which uncovered a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print that has economic, cultural, and symbolic foundations. The interview method's scope, however, is limited to editors' opinions and viewpoints. Analysing literary journal texts alongside their material contexts provides an opportunity to deepen the knowledge gained through the contextual review, and re-examine the results of the interview study from additional perspectives.

In exploring these perspectives, this chapter finds evidence that many editors' interventions in context favour print. Despite these interventions, this chapter argues that the effects of digital and print materialities can be expressed as 'differences' rather than a hierarchy based on one medium's capacity to communicate literary value or create a 'bubble' for readers' engagement. This is particularly germane where this hierarchy is deployed to communicate literary and symbolic value, rather than in response to assessments of readers' literacies and agency. The writer's perspective is also interrogated—the last section of this chapter turns to a text with particular emphasis on writers' concerns, and reveals how economic issues can become entangled with editorial interventions that align literary value with print.

6.1 COMPLEMENTING INTERVIEW DATA

In seeking to understand the role materiality plays in the literary journal field, engaging in textual analysis can bring the researcher closer to subterranean values of different media

30 Recalling that the term 'post-digital' is adopted to describe the ongoing and definitive negotiation between old and new in the contemporary publishing sphere (Cramer, 2015; Mannion & Stinson, 2016, p. viii).

flowing through their texts. It bridges gaps in the interview data by searching for nuanced, perhaps hidden, understandings.

While interview research for this project relied on literary journal editors' knowledge and opinions to collect data on materiality's role in the literary journal field, it must be recognised that this research method is limited by participants' opinions, and that interviews only capture one experience and one point-of-view (Phillipov, 2013, pp. 213–214). In particular it must be noted that nearly all interview participants were white, middle class, highly-educated, and male, and that this necessarily influences the range of viewpoints available to this research. Likewise, this trend influences the scope of the literary journal field to incorporate different viewpoints and dynamism that a broader mix of race, ethnicity, and gender might provide, and which might alter the field and its manifestation of 'Australian' literature.

While an investigation into the potential influences that a broader cultural pool of editors might have on the sociology and future of the field is out of scope of this project, textual analysis does provide the opportunity to gather different representations of the Australian literary journal: those spoken through texts, which are themselves evidence of collaboration between writers, editors, and readers. While interviews might appear the more objective data source, narrative is a powerful reflection of culture—as Graeme Turner (1993) writes, 'narratives are ultimately produced by the culture; thus they generate meanings, take on significances, and assume forms that are articulations of the values, beliefs—the ideology—of the culture' (p. 1). In other words, texts may be interrogated for 'articulations' and information, not unlike interview participants. As McKee (2003) argues, 'texts are the material traces that are left of the practice of sense-making' (p. 15) —so meanings about the role of materiality can be drawn from within literary journals, *as well as* the discussion of them.

This research asks how literary journal editors use different media to achieve their goals, and this chapter finds evidence that the 'hierarchy of media' favouring print in literary journals is reinforced by editors' interventions in contextual information surrounding published work. This demonstrates that while data was gathered from editors in interviews, editors' values can also be understood through their journals. McKee (2003) writes, 'if we want to understand the world we live in, then we have to understand how people are making sense of that world' (p. 144). Editors make sense of their world *through* their publication choices and the creative process that is the construction of a literary journal. With this in

mind, literary journals can be viewed as animate, textual reflections of habitus in the field, whose materiality, writing, illustrations, structure, and design speak of, and participate in, its culture.

While interviews revealed much about editors' suppositions regarding readers' responses to different media, this research identifies a gap in the knowledge of how readers themselves might respond to print and digital writing. Are literary journal readers, for example, distracted when reading on screen, and contemplative when reading in print, as research into students' comprehension from Mangen, Walgermo, & Brønnick (2013), Kerr and Symons (2006), and Singer (2016) indicates? Is fiction better suited to print from the reader's perspective, and non-fiction to digital media? Textual analysis presents an opportunity to respond to questions about the value of different materialities through words that bridge gaps between three constitutive groups of literary journal communities (readers, writers, editors), with particular, broadening this project's scope beyond editors' perceptions. Textual analysis finds evidence that work published in digital media can be at least as valuable in communicating affect as print and, where digital culture forms a part of the narrative (as is the case in 'Attribution'), more powerful than the print equivalent. The result is a focus on 'difference' in media, rather than hierarchy.

This project's research questions exploring materiality in literary journals call for a material approach to textual analysis. Here, context, and 'paratext' become essential components of the text, and are analysed in conjunction with it. Paratext, as Gray (2010) puts it, plays a role in 'conditioning passages and trajectories that criss-cross the mediascape' (p. 23), influencing and even directing readers' responses to a text. The material approach is also useful because many texts in literary journals also appear in both print and digital media, so monitoring 'media translation' between these two materialities provides further opportunity for analysis. Hayles (2005) proposes to regard 'the transformation of a print document into an electronic text as a form of translation—"media translation"—which is inevitably also an act of interpretation' (p. 89). Hayles (2005) also suggests that the challenge of analysing works translated between print and digital media is to specify what they reveal about 'presuppositions underlying reading and writing' (p. 89). With this in mind, interrogating contextual and paratextual changes as texts move between media can expose the cultural and traditional bases for editors' decisions about media use.

In order to question and re-examine statements from interviews, the texts analysed in this chapter all have some degree of thematic engagement with the questions and anxieties

that characterise the literary journal field in its 'post-digital' publishing context. 'Reading machines', by Jessie Webb (2015), deals most directly with questions of online and offline literacies, deferring to the same dichotomy of 'distraction versus immersion' that many literary journal editors described. 'Attribution', by Zahid Gamieldien (0216), engages with writerly concerns about materiality, and explores the possibilities of its digital publishing context, raising questions about the 'hierarchy of media' favouring print uncovered in interviews. Community and social justice emerged as important themes in literary journals, particularly *The Lifted Brow*, and both 'My romances', by Sofija Stefanovic (2015), and 'Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human', by Oscar Schwartz (2015), raise questions about fair work in the digital mediasphere from the writer's point of view. These themes forge conceptual bonds between interview data and the field's context, and are explored through text and paratext, as well as media in translation.

The four texts chosen for analysis in this chapter were recently published in Australian literary journals *Overland* and *The Lifted Brow*. While chapter two's methodology gives a thorough rationale for these journals' and texts' selection, the following sections give a brief overview of the circumstances particular to these journals. They explore salient details about their media use and approaches to literary value that emerged in the contextual review and interview process and call for re-examination through textual analysis.

Overland

With its long history as a radical leftist journal concerned with social justice and reform, *Overland* has nonetheless reinvented itself to a large degree in recent years. Chapter four demonstrates how, in response to a changing readership and continuing funding uncertainty, *Overland* shifted towards a more general readership built particularly around writers.[31] The journal now publishes more content for and about writing in its print journal, alongside its traditional essays from the left side of politics, fiction, and poetry, while online, as Woodhead explained, works usually intervene in current debates and topics in the news, offering a starting place for discussion (personal communication, 15 June 2015). Given that Woodhead strongly stated that the print journal forms the basis of *Overland*'s business model, and recalling that 80 per cent of *Overland* readers identify as writers, it is little surprise that writers have been targeted in the print journal's efforts to expand its community, even if this might be at the expense of more traditional, radical subjects (J. Woodhead,

[31] See chapter four for further discussion of shifts in literary journals' primary concerns.

personal communication, 15 June 2015). Chapter four's examination of *Overland*'s content strategy discusses how 'writerly' content in regular columns had recently found its way into the journal, and demonstrates that up to 25 per cent of a given print journal's content now deals with issues about writing, designed for writers. The result is a self-sustaining 'print ecosystem', where the journal's embodied community is bound by values embedded in print, published in print, and perpetuated by a readership of would-be contributors.

With *Overland*'s readership forming a contextual frame for further exploration, juxtaposing interview data with texts under analysis can yield new insights into how editors use media to achieve their goals, and the role materiality plays in the field. In her interview, Woodhead said that given the volume of work *Overland* posts online, and the interaction that can be achieved there, 'sometimes it does feel weird to think about how much effort goes into the print magazine' (personal communication, 15 June 2015). Textual analysis of *Overland* sheds light on how and why the exploitation of materiality in literary journals by editors might favour print publication. Analytical reading can strip away some layers of performativity and self-censorship, exploring realms that interview subjects might avoid because it 'feels weird' to dwell there.

The textual analysis of 'Reading machines' and 'Attribution' can be used to question editors' statements about the value of print and digital publication. Where are editors' decisions based on ideas about literary value and media embedded in the habitus of the field, where might they be the result of pragmatism, and where might they be based on what, aesthetically, best suits the text in question? Both texts dwell at the intersection of between humans and technology. 'Reading machines' argues for a 'politics of reading' that favours print for its ability to communicate affect over information. Webb's claims are complicated, however, when her piece appears 'translated' into digital form. 'Attribution' demonstrates the dizzying power of the digital to strip or obfuscate identity, and to disperse factual information away from an authoritative centre. At the same time, the text's appearance in a digital fiction edition of the journal incorporates the particularities of digital reading into its narrative, challenging many editors' claims that fiction is better suited to print publication.

The Lifted Brow

In his interview, Cooney of *The Lifted Brow* expressed passionate views about social justice, achieved by publishing the voices of marginalised groups and alternative viewpoints. He described *The Lifted Brow* as a journal that has 'traditionally published work that anyone else or most other publications wouldn't be interested in' (S. Cooney, personal

communication, 5 May 2015). As chapter four's contextual review describes, *The Lifted Brow* relies on this standpoint for its 'brand', its position in the field, and has developed an 'affective network'—an 'ethos of reading' that promotes a sense of community for such marginalised work. This community is bound by the material qualities of the organisation's 'flagship' print publication where 'print, as the sign of traditional literary culture, can become compatible with the transforming technoconsumerist market' (O'Dell, 2014, p. 197).

The following texts from *The Lifted Brow* engage with ideas of community, fair work, and marginalised groups, linking issues important to the journal with questions of materiality explored in their analysis. Two texts published in issue 25 of the journal[32]—'My Romances' by Sofija Stefanovic, and 'Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human' by Oscar Schwartz—depict 'post-digital' society from within, where fundamental social interactions—falling in love and engaging in work—are, like literary journals, subject to ongoing change. While the traditions of the offline world might seem dependable, reliable, and steadfast by comparison, both writers are sensitive to the potential of online spaces. At the same time, however, editors' interventions in these works' material contexts emphasise the value of print.

6.2 THE POLITICS OF E-READING: 'READING MACHINES'

Webb's position in 'Reading machines', an essay about contemporary literacies, rests on a dichotomy between print and digital consumption. This text positions print as the authoritative centre of knowledge and affect, and digital reading as corrupted by consumerism and distraction. This is communicated both within the text and through paratextual elements curated by editors that seem to reaffirm print's value. That said, when the piece is 'translated' into digital and published on the web, its content and context become contradictory, raising questions about the claims it makes regarding the superior value of print. The interviews indicate that a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print seems active in the literary journal field. Analysing work such as Webb's submits this hierarchy to further scrutiny, helping uncover precisely how and why print might hold more value for literary journal editors and the field.

Webb uses a Marxist approach to suggest that digital reading creates 'consumers', who 'process text', in the pursuit of information, while on the analogue page, reading takes place

[32] This issue marked a radical redesign for the print journal, and was influenced by editors' internships with leading US journal *McSweeney's*, as discussed in chapter four.

in an embodied, physical landscape conductive to the pursuit of 'knowledge'—and is a site of authority to be valued (2015, pp. 56–57). Much as editors described print as a 'quiet' place for contemplative reading, Webb's piece establishes print as the site of affective, deep, and engaged reading, while digital becomes the locus of distracted and consumerist consumption distinct *from* reading as it is traditionally understood.

The opinions Webb expresses in this piece were reflected in the interviews with editors, many of whom described digital reading as distracted, and hinted that its affective power was inferior to that of print. Skinner of *The Canary Press* said, for example, that 'people's reading habits online (my own included) are not conducive to the deep reading required to truly appreciate fiction' (personal communication, 23 March 2016). Webb's essay broadcasts this view that digital publication is best avoided by those aiming for the serious contemplation or appreciation of their work in an authoritative setting. For Webb, as for many editors who participated in interviews, the role of materiality is to provide an appropriate setting for readers to approach and consume literary journal texts, particularly works of fiction. In most cases, this means publishing in print.

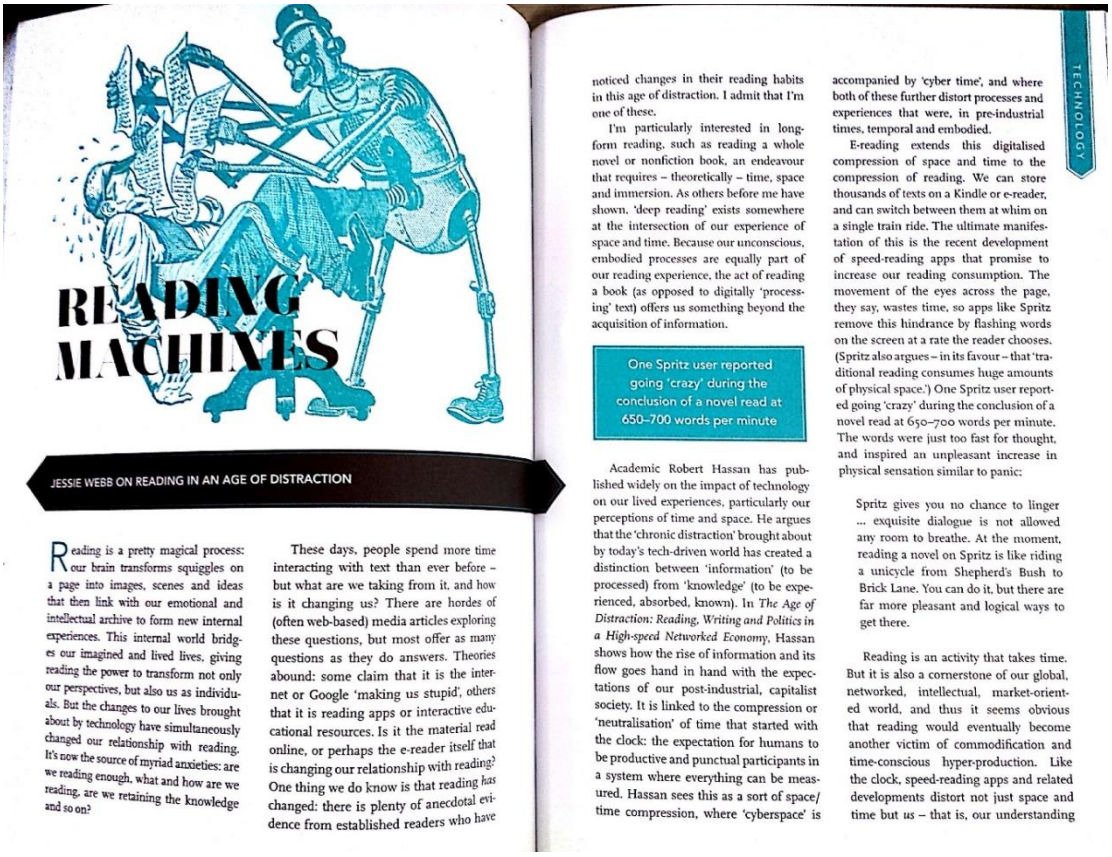
For writers and editors of literary journals seeking to connect with readers, Webb's logic is unsettled by 'Reading machines'' appearance on *Overland*'s website. Here, itself reproduced in digital form, there is some risk that the text might contradict its own claims. The following analysis explores the effects of material context on text, in an attempt to test claims 'Reading machines' (and literary journal editors) make about materiality. This can reveal how editors' treatment of texts in different media affects their authority and value, and the way they are read.

6.2.1 Print context

Webb's claims about print and digital reading can be further interrogated by examining them in their material context, which in turn provides insight into the role of materiality in the literary journal field. In the print version of *Overland*, where this essay first appeared, a header announces, in full capitals, 'Jessie Webb on reading in an age of distraction'. This paratextual element indicates how readers should approach the subject matter: by labelling the digital age 'an age of distraction', the reader is primed to receive evidence supporting this view. Speaking from outside the essay, the header's 'voice' is made more powerful because it represents the voice of the journal, which carries the authority of a textual overseer; and here,

it is worth noting that literary journals as texts are their editors' own creative compositions.[33] In identifying ours as 'an age of distraction', *Overland* and the editors behind it gesture to the reader like literary stage managers, directing the attitude their audience should adopt. In this case, the reader is drawn into a discourse that places print at the top of a media hierarchy in literary journals and the wider literary field.

Webb's essay was illustrated by Brent Stegeman (see Figure 6.1), and its title, both in print and online, features an old-fashioned typesetter, terrified, fending off a robot assailing him with printed sheets of paper. A pull quote, highlighted on the page, complements the image, following the theme of technological assault: 'One Spritz user reported going "crazy" during the conclusion of a novel read at 650–700 words per minute'[34] (Webb, 2015, p. 57). Before beginning to read the main article, readers (many of whom will identify as writers, if *Overland*'s research is correct) are directed by the journal's paratextual elements to adopt a position that is suspicious of digital writing.



READING MACHINES

JESSIE WEBB ON READING IN AN AGE OF DISTRACTION

Reading is a pretty magical process: our brain transforms squiggles on a page into images, scenes and ideas that then link with our emotional and intellectual archive to form new internal experiences. This internal world bridges our imagined and lived lives, giving reading the power to transform not only our perspectives, but also us as individuals. But the changes to our lives brought about by technology have simultaneously changed our relationship with reading. It's now the source of myriad anxieties: are we reading enough, what and how are we reading, are we retaining the knowledge and so on?

These days, people spend more time interacting with text than ever before – but what are we taking from it, and how is it changing us? There are hordes of (often web-based) media articles exploring these questions, but most offer as many questions as they do answers. Theories abound: some claim that it is the internet or Google 'making us stupid', others that it is reading apps or interactive educational resources. Is it the material read online, or perhaps the e-reader itself that is changing our relationship with reading? One thing we do know is that reading *has* changed: there is plenty of anecdotal evidence from established readers who have noticed changes in their reading habits in this age of distraction. I admit that I'm one of these.

I'm particularly interested in long-form reading, such as reading a whole novel or nonfiction book, an endeavour that requires – theoretically – time, space and immersion. As others before me have shown, 'deep reading' exists somewhere at the intersection of our experience of space and time. Because our unconscious, embodied processes are equally part of our reading experience, the act of reading a book (as opposed to digitally 'processing' text) offers us something beyond the acquisition of information.

One Spritz user reported going 'crazy' during the conclusion of a novel read at 650–700 words per minute

Academic Robert Hassan has published widely on the impact of technology on our lived experiences, particularly our perceptions of time and space. He argues that the 'chronic distraction' brought about by today's tech-driven world has created a distinction between 'information' (to be processed) from 'knowledge' (to be experienced, absorbed, known). In *The Age of Distraction: Reading, Writing and Politics in a High-speed Networked Economy*, Hassan shows how the rise of information and its flow goes hand in hand with the expectations of our post-industrial, capitalist society. It is linked to the compression or 'neutralisation' of time that started with the clock: the expectation for humans to be productive and punctual participants in a system where everything can be measured. Hassan sees this as a sort of space/time compression, where 'cyberspace' is accompanied by 'cyber time', and where both of these further distort processes and experiences that were, in pre-industrial times, temporal and embodied.

E-reading extends this digitalised compression of space and time to the compression of reading. We can store thousands of texts on a Kindle or e-reader, and can switch between them at whim on a single train ride. The ultimate manifestation of this is the recent development of speed-reading apps that promise to increase our reading consumption. The movement of the eyes across the page, they say, wastes time, so apps like Spritz remove this hindrance by flashing words on the screen at a rate the reader chooses. (Spritz also argues – in its favour – that 'traditional reading consumes huge amounts of physical space.') One Spritz user reported going 'crazy' during the conclusion of a novel read at 650–700 words per minute. The words were just too fast for thought, and inspired an unpleasant increase in physical sensation similar to panic:

> Spritz gives you no chance to linger ... exquisite dialogue is not allowed any room to breathe. At the moment, reading a novel on Spritz is like riding a unicycle from Shepherd's Bush to Brick Lane. You can do it, but there are far more pleasant and logical ways to get there.

Reading is an activity that takes time. But it is also a cornerstone of our global, networked, intellectual, market-oriented world, and thus it seems obvious that reading would eventually become another victim of commodification and time-conscious hyper-production. Like the clock, speed-reading apps and related developments distort not just space and time but *us* – that is, our understanding

TECHNOLOGY

[33] Brooks of *Southerly*, for example, described the 'subliminal' 'subtleties' required of his crafting each literary journal's 'aesthetic' (personal communication, 11 June 2015).

[34] Sprintz (sprintzinc.com) is a mobile reading app that flashes individual words on a screen at a rate chosen by the user, with the goal of making reading faster and more efficient.

Figure 6.1: Scanned image of the first two pages of Jessie Webb's 'Reading machines' as it appears in *Overland* issue 221 (pp.56–57)—note the illustration, header, and pull quote

Furthermore, in Webb's piece, dichotomies bridle the 're-wired', e-reading mind not only to the frenetic pace of the globalised, networked present, but reconfigure the human into components of the capitalist system. Webb's argument asserts that e-texts magnify the 'post-industrial, capitalist' (p. 57) demands on time, work, and consumption that began with the introduction of the clock.[35] By contrast, print reading is grounded, rooted in the body, independent. Framing these dichotomies in Marxist, politicised terms aligns print with the political-left stance of the journal itself—harnessing the authority of the journal as textual overseer to ratify the writer's opinions on the value of print publishing over its digital counterpart. Still, this authority is called into question when the text is considered in its digital form.

6.2.2 Digital context

Early in her essay, Webb argues that 'theories abound' as to how e-reading is 'changing us'. 'There are hordes', she argues, 'of (often web-based) media articles exploring these questions, but most offer as many questions as they do answers' (2015, p. 56). This aside referring to 'often web-based' media articles implies that web-based articles have less factual value and that print publication as counterpart has superior authority. If 'Reading machines' is successful at promoting the 'hierarchy of media' this research identifies in its print version, how is the essay to be read from the screen, and what can this tell us about the role of materiality in the literary journal field? Reading a piece dealing so explicitly with issues of digital literacies in the medium it dismisses is doubly compelling because an edginess is created by juxtaposing authorial intention (to appear in print) with its reverse (appearing in digital).

Throughout her article, Webb is unable to reconcile the binary of higher valued print (affective reading) and less valued digital (information consumption)—but Webb does not consider the effect when the same text appears in both media, as this text does.

[35] In her assessment of the internet's effects on time as commodity and time as luxury, Webb echoes Baudrillard's (2011, p. 18) prediction of a future of 'no dead time, no distraction, no dreamtime: time is no longer your enemy, nor your luxury (you cannot spend it uselessly). It is not your master or your slave: it is your partner, and it resolves itself without past or future, in exhausting instantaneity'.

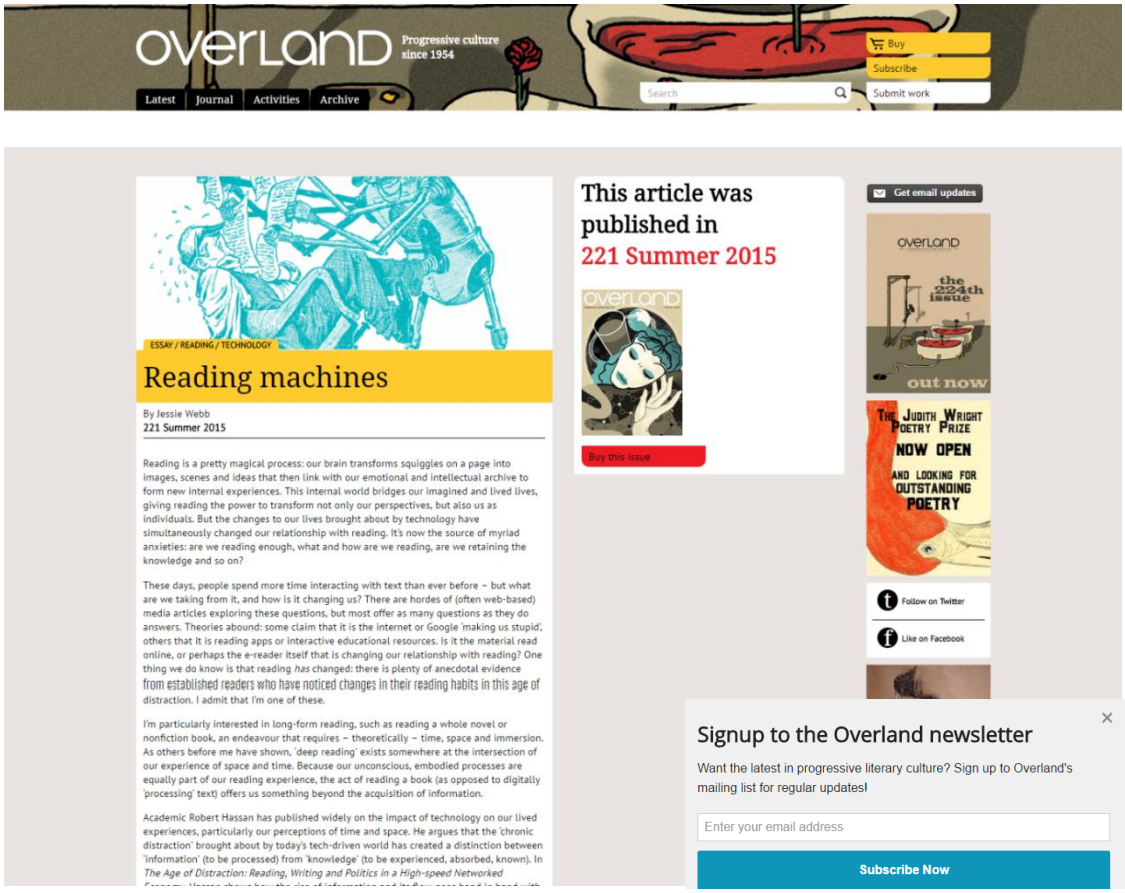


Figure 6.2. Screenshot of Jessie Webb's 'Reading machines' as it appears on the *Overland* website (accessed 6 October 2016)

When Webb's piece is considered on the screen, some aspects of its digital context could confirm her claim that 'humans as gadgets, as machines' serve to make reading economically 'productive and competitive', rather than 'rooted in the body' (2015, p. 59). In the screenshot in Figure 6.2, her essay is accompanied by eight imperative 'calls to action': 'buy', 'get', 'subscribe', 'submit', 'follow', 'like', 'search', and a persistent popup requesting the reader to 'signup'. Just as Webb argues that 'chronic distraction prevents us engaging with text' (2015, p. 60), online, her own essay indeed competes with web and screen elements for readers' attention. Just as interview participants situated the value of print in its quiet material 'space' as a counterpoint to dispersed digital distraction, Webb suggests that when reading in digital, 'overstimulation and anticipation related to the device inhibits memory and retention', causing readers to regularly 'step out of time' and into distraction (2015, p. 60).

Still, like interviews, the reader is largely absent from Webb's argument. Webb's piece puts little faith in her reader to avoid 'distraction' online, but the appearance of 'Reading machines' in digital form raises questions about the validity of her claims, and the

opportunity to test them. If Webb's meaning can be communicated to the reader online, her site of 'temporal capitalism', her claims are cast into disarray. While it is true that the digital screen offers more opportunities for divergence, tangents, and distraction[36], it remains possible that distraction might be a choice readers consciously make to enrich their understanding of a topic or text, or their enjoyment of it. Meanwhile, Webb's dichotomies oversimplify the different literacies associated with print and digital writing. Webb's work, like the statements of literary journal editors, can be considered a product of digital publishing's intermediation of the literary journal field. This intermediation highlights the differences between the two media, exaggerating the value of print as *counterpoint* to the online mediasphere.

For Webb, print reading offers us 'something beyond the acquisition of information' (p. 57), which she identifies as the purpose of digital reading. Editors, likewise, asserted that fiction was better suited to print's quiet, contemplative 'space'. Analysing another text published in *Overland* provides an opportunity to test Webb's (and editors') claims about digital reading as a consumer activity. What happens, for example, when a piece of digital fiction is read in its native context online? Researchers such as Singer (2016), Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010), Liu et al.(2009) and Ophir et al. (2009) have all demonstrated that digital reading is distracting and interferes with cognitive processes. In a literary context, however, it remains to be seen whether it is possible for the online environment to *contribute* to a narrative.

6.3 TESTING DIGITAL FICTION: 'ATTRIBUTION'

While Webb's 'Reading machines' provided an example of 'media translation'—a common phenomenon in literary journals, where the same works often appear in different media—Zahid Gamieldien's 'Attribution' appears in digital form only, published in *Overland*'s Autumn 2016 Digital Fiction Edition. It is unknown whether 'Attribution' was intended for print or digital publication when it was written, but its appearance in *Overland*'s Digital Fiction Edition can nonetheless inform an understanding of the role materiality plays in literary journals and the 'hierarchy of media' in the field that the interviews reveal.

[36] Research from Liu et al. (2009), for example, reported the persistent multitasking of readers engaging with digital texts on digital devices, while Ophir et al. (2009) propose that the sheer volume of information available online frequently interferes with information processing.

‘Attribution’ deals directly with questions of authorship, an issue of particular interest when read in context of *Overland*’s ‘print ecosystem’, where a large proportion of readers also identify as writers and where, this research proposes, messages about the use and value of different media are circulated and cemented in the habitus of the field. At the same time, the text provides an opportunity to test editors’ (and Webb’s) claims about fiction’s suitability to print, revealing whether a piece of fiction can communicate effectively with the reader in the ‘distracted’ online mediasphere.

In this narrative, not only is the digital medium present as an intermediating force, but the text deals explicitly with the anxieties of a writer whose work appears (and disappears) in both the physical and digital realms. ‘Attribution’ inhabits a liminal space between fiction and concept, where the author–narrator, who goes by the pseudonym Juno Barrios, finds herself ‘retired to a life of relative obscurity’ (2016). Years ago, Barrios published a few successful novels, and has been both ‘heralded as the female Jorge Luis Borges, or compared unfavourably with him’ (2016). Barrios discovers a series of illustrations derived from her fiction published in a zine created by a person using the pseudonym ‘Swishy51’. ‘She’ is furious, but able to forget the printed zine’s apparent plagiarism by putting it into her desk drawer and ‘out of my mind’; however, ‘Some months or years later’, searching for her fiction online, Barrios discovers a blog, or ‘digital zine’, by ‘Swishy51’, again full of illustrations lifted from her own stories (2016). The lack of attribution, and the mystery created by the online apparition, lead Barrios into a spiral of obsession.

In this way, the narrative explores the relationships between authorship and materiality. This representation of authorship situates a more reliable, traceable, and attributable identity in the bounded, printed form, while depicting a dizzying dispersal in the digital realm. That said, it can be argued that rather than distracting the reader, a sense of the web’s changeability that pervades the text actually enriches it, providing a live experience of the author’s anxiety, and revealing that some of the value editors attribute to different media might be better framed in terms of *difference* that can be exploited, as digital media is in this work of fiction.

6.3.1 Digital instability

Just as literary journal editors deferred to the seeming ‘permanence’ of the printed object, the immutable nature of print also symbolises stability for the author–narrator of ‘Attribution’. While Barrios is driven to ‘exact attribution’ from ‘Swishy51’ in her quest,

another writerly fear lies barely concealed in this story—that of the instability of digital texts themselves, and their failure to measure up to print's relative stability and authority. The fact that 'Attribution' appears in a digital publication immerses the reader in an infinitely shifting sensory environment, demonstrating, rather than simply depicting, the cacophony of the digital world. Like Swishy51's painting of one of Barrios's works of the 'same image repeating and diminishing *ad infinitum*' (2016), the story's relentless mirroring and replication echo through both the plagiarism of Barrios's work and her obsession with the digital text as she refreshes and rechecks, victim of its uncontainable power to spread—to morph *ad infinitum*. In the online environment, instability feeds Barrios's obsession—a sense that visitors to the *Overland* website taste in the possibility for endless variations of the 'Attribution' text through its changing paratext.

In questioning what the material qualities of 'Attribution' can reveal about the role of materiality in literary journals, it is necessary to delve deeper into how and why digital publication provokes anxiety for the narrator. 'Attribution' is a mystery, providing red herrings and forking paths of possibility for the reader, and its digital context complements the narrator's quest for attribution. On discovering the digital zine, she becomes 'fixated' with googling, refreshing, relentlessly searching, 'drilling down into the fissure'. because

> This wasn't like a paper zine, which would be distributed to a handful of people and probably forgotten in a dustbin, or left to languish in a desk drawer somewhere. The blog was on the internet, a communication to everyone, an assertion to the world at large that Swishy51 was the creator of the works that, in fact, I had created and published under my pseudonym. (2016)

Barrios recognises that, with print's bounded and limited materiality as counterpoint, the internet becomes a placeless 'space' that is both infinite and infinitely empty, and both anonymous and endlessly networked. For the writer–reader of *Overland*, print, as counterpoint to digital, takes on all the solidity of its material boundaries, its authority protected and protecting against the unknown, anonymous, and ephemeral.

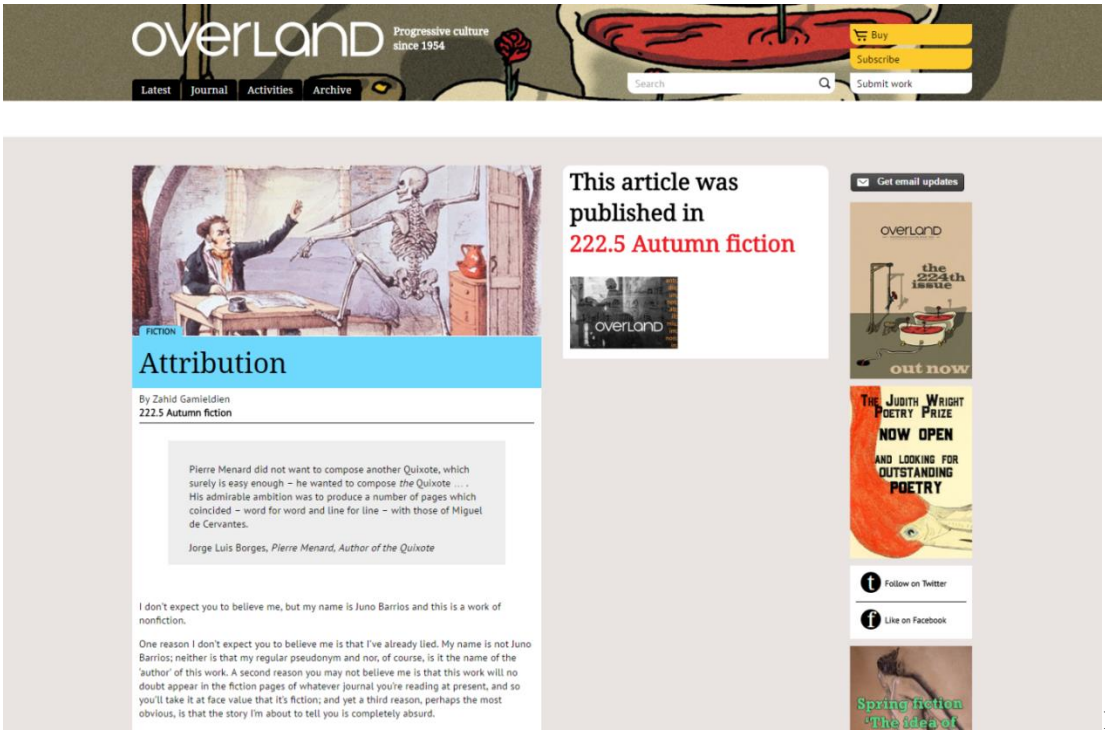


Figure 6.3: Zahid Gamieldien's 'Attribution' in *Overland*'s Digital Autumn Fiction Edition 222.5. Features the header illustration 'Death' and excerpt from 'Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote' by Borges (accessed 6 October 2016)

Borrowing much from Borges, 'Attribution's' obsession with copying and replicating owes a debt to that author's short story 'The library of Babel', where an infinite number of texts contains every possible expressible idea or story in every language.[37] Hayles (2005)notes that each time a print or handwritten text is 'coded' into digital language, capturing all the possible material and aesthetic experiences of reading that text in its original medium would necessitate 'the digital equivalent of Borges's Library of Babel' (p. 96). Likewise, the shifting material and paratextual contexts surrounding digital texts creates a similar infinitesimal sense of replication and possibility.

On the *Overland* website, 'Attribution' is surrounded by much of the same changeable paratextual material as Webb's 'Reading machines', and its shifting context serves as a constant reminder of the web's mutability. Even though 'Attribution' is 'published in 222.5 Autumn Fiction edition', the material on this web page is forever changing. When Figure 6.3's screenshot (above) was taken, for example, the popup prompting the reader to sign up for *Overland*'s newsletter had not yet appeared, and visiting at another time might render a completely different visual image; the *Overland* header is refreshed with each new print

[37] A project that has been recreated online in a work of conceptual digital art by Jonathan Basile (2015) at libraryofbabel.info.

issue; and advertisements for prizes and current editions are circulated over time. Barrios is maddened by these infinite possibilities of the web:

> I became fixated, as only one fighting a lost cause can become fixated. My back grew kyphotic and I stopped eating properly. I began to stay up nights. The pale glow of a computer screen illuminated my cheekbones, over which the skin became stretched and thin. (2016)

In this case, the instability of the *Overland* website quietly mirrors the endless, and endlessly changing, web Barrios encounters. On one hand, Just as literary journal editors characterised the web as a 'noisy place' unsuited to the contemplation of serious writing, the cacophony of the web experienced by the author–narrator in 'Attribution' relates the perceived stability of digital publishing, and the value of print as its counterpoint. That said, the dizzying effect of digital possibilities that confront the reader online actually enriches the text. The reader, faced with the same choices for exploration as the narrator, is immersed in the textual environment. Again, rather than a 'hierarchy of media' in literary journals, textual analysis uncovers difference that literary journal editors can exploit for meaning and affect.

Just like the narrator, who could forget the physical zine appropriating her work in a desk drawer, but could not leave its online version alone, the reader engaging with 'Attribution' on the networked screen are summoned to mirror Barrios's 'googling' and 'searching' as she drills 'down into the fissure' (2016). At its heart, this story is a mystery, and situates itself as a factual account—the opening line declares, 'I don't expect you to believe me, but my name is Juno Barrios and this is a work of nonfiction'—but this is immediately confounded by the narrator's self-declared unreliability:

> One reason I don't expect you to believe me is that I've already lied. My name is not Juno Barrios; neither is that my regular pseudonym and nor, of course, is it the name of the 'author' of this work. A second reason you may not believe me is that this work will no doubt appear in the fiction pages of whatever journal you're reading at present, and so you'll take it at face value that it's fiction; and yet a third reason, perhaps the most obvious, is that the story I'm about to tell you is completely absurd. (2016)

Barrios herself has fallen victim to the internet's invitation to distraction and endless investigation in her search for 'Swishy51' (whose Google image search results are shown in Figure 6.4):

> I stared at Swishy51's blog, refreshing, waiting for updates. I googled misspellings, searching the usernames 'Swishy1' through to 'Swishy1000', discovering that Swishy25 was a swimming champion and Swishy33 was a male pole dancer. All I could surmise from the crumbs of Swishy51's internet trail was that they were young, probably born after Reagan and Thatcher and the collapse of the Soviet Union—certainly born into a world much changed from the one I was born into—and they had become less traceable online as the years had passed. (2016)

In print, a deliberately and playfully unreliable narrator like Barrios must be, bounded as the reading experience is, taken somewhat at face value. The 'bubble' that Cooney felt print creates is located, perhaps, in print's inability to take the reader elsewhere, so that, without physically leaving the journal or book behind, the reader can only look deeper (imaginatively, analytically) within the narrative itself. Perhaps the internet's most profound effect was to make virtually infinite information searchable with a few clicks: with search boxes in address bars and on desktops, the digital reading environment is designed around—and *insists* on—a literacy punctuated by endless small acts of verification, diversion, and investigation, as depicted in the Google image search for 'Swishy51' in Figure 6.4.

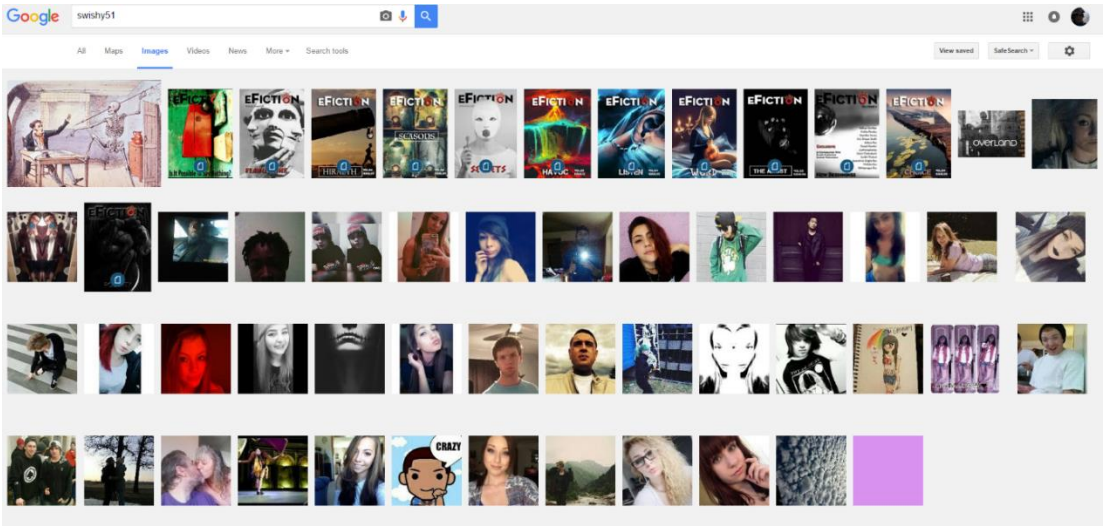


Figure 6.4: A Google image search for 'Swishy51' reveals dozens of online 'identities' that could be pursued by the reader (accessed 6 October 2016)

Furthermore, it seems that the narrative is at times designed to encourage the reader to stray into the infinite possibilities of online searching. Early on, Barrios declares, provocatively, that 'none of the names, locations, genders, titles, etcetera, are accurate—so don't bother looking for clues' (2016). Barrios has gone to extreme lengths to conceal her identity because, she writes, 'I know from experience that it would be all too easy in this

digital age to connect the dots and discover who I am' (2016). These statements heighten the sense of mystery, and the reader's curiosity. In its digital context, the mystery 'Attribution' builds around identity and authority seems deliberately designed to provoke the reader into shifting the mouse and searching.

'Attribution's' invitation to search (explored in Figure 6.4) goes some way towards authenticating editors' claims that online is 'not conducive to the deep reading required to truly appreciate fiction' (R. Skinner, personal communication, 23 March 2016), that when we read on screen we are 'distracted by 27 browser tabs and email windows and stuff' (S. Cooney, personal communication, 5 May 2015). Conversely, 'Attribution's' mystery is heightened, its narrative enriched, by precisely the temptation to search that its online context invites. This message is received not because the story depicts an author 'drilling down into the fissure' of online distraction, but because the text prompts the reader to live the same experience: to accept the internet's invitation to leave a narrative and search. When considered from the reader's perspective, 'Attribution' is a highly successful piece of digital fiction, even while its themes could be read as advocating print's value over digital dispersion. This problematises editors' statements about distraction online, and the judgements associated with it. Textual analysis of 'Attribution' suggests that contrary to the 'hierarchy of media' detected in interviews with editors of Australian literary journals, digital writing could be seen as a *different* mode, with different attributes, adding different nuances to a piece of fiction writing, rather than a space that, when compared to print and intermediated by these differences, appears distracted or commercialised.

The contextual review and interviews with literary journal editors reveal that factors influencing decisions about the use of media are not confined to the binaries of distraction versus immersion, but concerned with broader economic and cultural issues. For example, both the contextual review and interviews expose how important a sense of community is to literary journals' subscription business model and capacity to reconcile market forces with the publication of 'literary' work via 'affective networks'. In order to further investigate themes surrounding community, as well as literary value embodied in media, this chapter returns to a text in 'media translation' from *The Lifted Brow*.

6.4 MATERIAL LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY: 'MY ROMANCES'

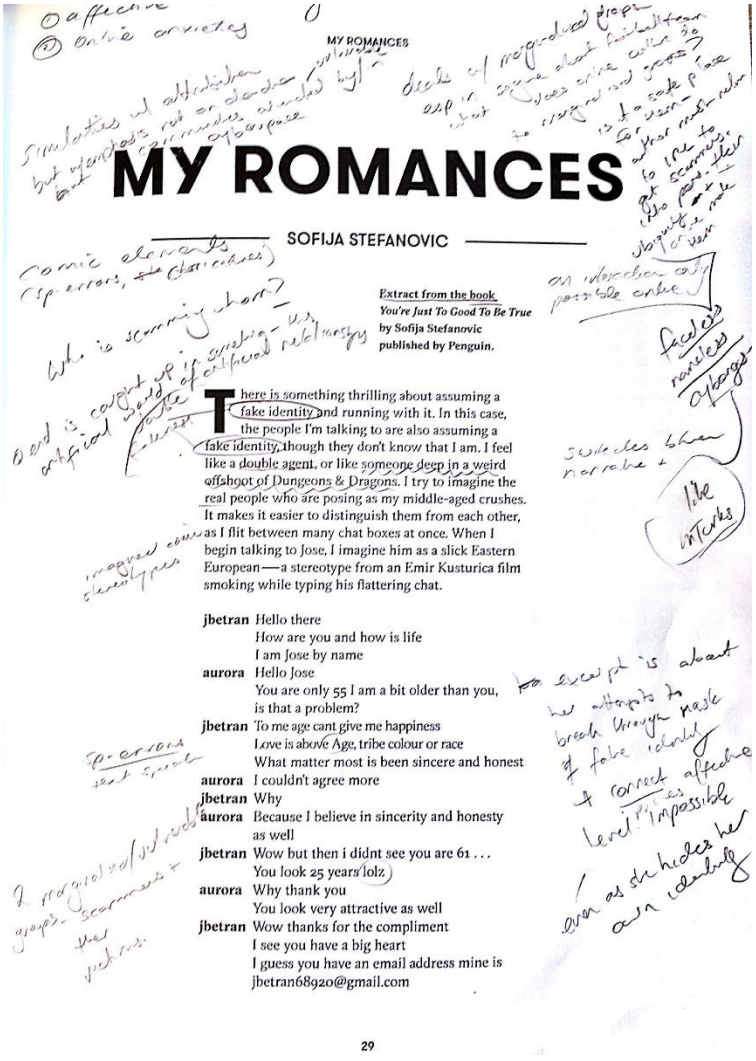
Sofija Stefanovic's 'My romances' is an extract from her book *You're just too good to be true*, published in both print and digital form in *The Lifted Brow*. While the book itself is a

broad investigation of all aspects of online romance scams (much of it told from the perspectives of victims, police, and psychologists), the 'My romances' extract describes Stefanovic's efforts to connect with online scammers in the hope that one will open up to her and provide their point of view, 'a glimpse' into their world. That 'My romances' is concerned with unequal relationships in the digital sphere opens a thematic dialogue between text, statements from literary journal editors, and trends mapped in the contextual review. This dialogue provides an opportunity to test and question statements and assumptions where community and social justice issues are concerned, particularly as these are of specific importance to *The Lifted Brow*'s 'brand'.

Like 'Reading machines' in *Overland*, the fact that 'My romances' is published in both print and digital forms provides an opportunity to compare the languages of two different materialities, juxtaposing these with interview data about the value of publishing in different media. As is the case in other texts analysed in this chapter, it appears that where editors have intervened and curated textual context, a 'hierarchy of media' emerges. On the other hand, when the text is regarded from the reader's point of view, difference in the material languages of different media is emphasised, rather than a discourse of superiority and inferiority.

6.4.1 Print origins and symbolic capital

Before turning to issues of community and media in literary journals, analysis of this text in its print and digital context sheds some light on how editors have used print to signify value in this particular work. Before it was a literary journal text, Stefanovic's piece formed part of a full-length book published by Penguin, a fact that is announced just beneath the author's name and the excerpt's title in *The Lifted Brow*. While such attribution is necessary and normal under Australian copyright law, the note's appearance right before the text (it could equally have published in a footnote or endnote) gestures to the attitude the reader should adopt in relation to the text's content. If, as this research project suggests, the literary journal field is influenced by a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print, the fact that the extract has already appeared in a printed book (and is appearing in the journal again in print), is significant, and communicates that the author has achieved a degree of literary value and 'worthiness'.



MY ROMANCES

MY ROMANCES

SOFIJA STEFANOVIC

Extract from the book
You're Just Too Good To Be True
by Sofija Stefanovic
published by Penguin.

There is something thrilling about assuming a fake identity and running with it. In this case, the people I'm talking to are also assuming a fake identity, though they don't know that I am. I feel like a double agent, or like someone deep in a weird offshoot of Dungeons & Dragons. I try to imagine the real people who are posing as my middle-aged crushes. It makes it easier to distinguish them from each other, as I flit between many chat boxes at once. When I begin talking to Jose, I imagine him as a slick Eastern European—a stereotype from an Emir Kusturica film smoking while typing his flattering chat.

jbetran Hello there
How are you and how is life
I am Jose by name
aurora Hello Jose
You are only 55 I am a bit older than you, is that a problem?
jbetran To me age cant give me happiness
Love is above Age, tribe colour or race
What matter most is been sincere and honest
aurora I couldn't agree more
jbetran Why
aurora Because I believe in sincerity and honesty as well
jbetran Wow but then i didnt see you are 61 . . .
You look 25 years lolz
aurora Why thank you
You look very attractive as well
jbetran Wow thanks for the compliment
I see you have a big heart
I guess you have an email address mine is jbetran68920@gmail.com

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Figure 6.5: Scanned image of 'My romances' as it appears in *The Lifted Brow* issue 25, with the researcher's notations—note the narrator's use of transcription and 'Extract from the book' introduction

Online, the message is made even clearer because the piece is led with a header illustration of the book's cover with its iconic, classic Penguin design, complete with an endorsement by media personality John Safran and the Penguin logo. The book cover illustration takes such precedence that the extract's title is barely noticeable at the top of the page.

In *The field of cultural production*, Bourdieu (1996) explains how symbolic capital flows through the literary field. For Bourdieu (1996), the act of publishing is an endorsement of the literary value of the work in question, so that publication 'ensures that the product of artistic fabrication [writing] will receive a *consecration*—and the consecration will be greater the more consecrated the merchant [publisher] himself is' (p. 167). In being published, the author is supported by the reputation of the publishing house in 'all the symbolic capital the merchant has accumulated' (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 168). Bourdieu (1996) also writes that

different publishing houses can accumulate different quantities of symbolic capital according to their age, publishing history, stable of authors, avant-gardism, and so on.

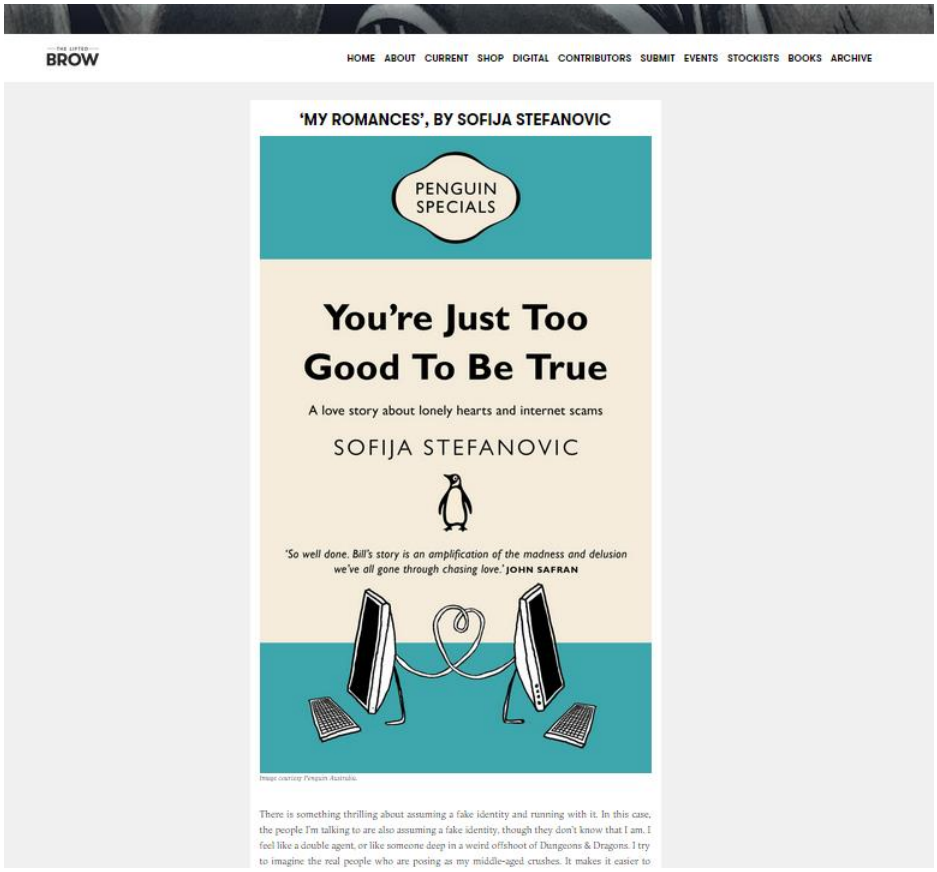


Figure 6.6: 'My romances' as it appears on *The Lifted Brow* website, led by a large illustration depicting the book's iconic 'Penguin' cover (accessed 10 October 2016)

Given that Penguin is an imprint that, in Australia, carries a high degree of symbolic capital, and that symbolic capital flows through the literary field in the production and reproduction of symbolic goods, *The Lifted Brow* also benefits from republishing Stefanovic's extract. Editors have harnessed the print origins of 'My romances'' not only to reflect the value of Stefanovic's work, but to feed the flow of symbolic capital already running into *The Lifted Brow* through the Penguin brand.

The fact that, in both print and digital media, *The Lifted Brow* chooses to call attention to the extract's print origins demonstrates that, alongside more established emissaries of symbolic power such as imprints and prize-winners, printed objects can circulate symbolic capital by the simple nature of their materiality. This reaffirms that, intermediated by digital publishing, print has taken on particular significance for editors in the field. In this case, editors use print symbolism to augment the value of their own publications. The question

remains as to how readers and writers respond to the same language of value, the same 'hierarchy of media'.

6.4.2 Print and digital context

Alongside editors' paratextual use of the Penguin brand to communicate value, 'My romances' presents subtler evidence of different material languages in different media. Like *Overland*'s 'Attribution', this evidence allows an examination of materiality that reveals sophisticated differences in the way materiality can be used to make meaning in the field. This chapter argues that such differences are not determinants of value or usefulness in themselves. That said, the manipulation of these effects nonetheless reflects editors' attitudes to different media.

'My romances' is an example of media translation, appearing in both print and digital forms. Examining this piece in both contexts can thus expose editors' 'presuppositions underlying reading and writing' (Hayles, 2005, p. 89). In 'My romances', Stefanovic's narrator assumes a false online identity: 'aurora'. Concealed behind their screens, 'aurora' and her online scammers' identities are subjective, ephemeral, and draw attention to the performative nature of online personas.

In depicting relationships based on false identities and subterfuge, editors make use of the material language of text, and its contextual position in print, to establish and maintain distance between the narrator and her online scammer interlocutors. The use of transcription is significant here (see Figure 6.7). Rather than reporting speech or ordinary direct speech in quotation marks, the conversations the narrator 'aurora' has with online scammers are formatted as formal transcriptions presented as mock evidence to an imaginary court:

> pasting chats into my box, as well as many others, as he multitasks.
>
> **Johnsonbakers** You are pretty
> And have a lovely smile
> You are pretty too
> **aurora** Thanks very much!
> I am a lot older than you though
> **Johnsonbakers** Well age is just a number
>
> As I chat to Jose and Johnson, Enes approaches. Because of his strange turn of phrase (and to distinguish him from the other stereotypes I've created), I picture him looking like Borat, from the film of the same name.

Figure 6.7: Scanned extract from ‘My romances’ in *The Lifted Brow*’s issue 25 print edition, demonstrating the transcription formatting for reporting conversations with online scammers

Online, Stefanovic’s transcription is enhanced by the material language of the digital medium. Figure 6.8 depicts the same conversation from Figure 6.7 as it appears on *The Lifted Brow* website:

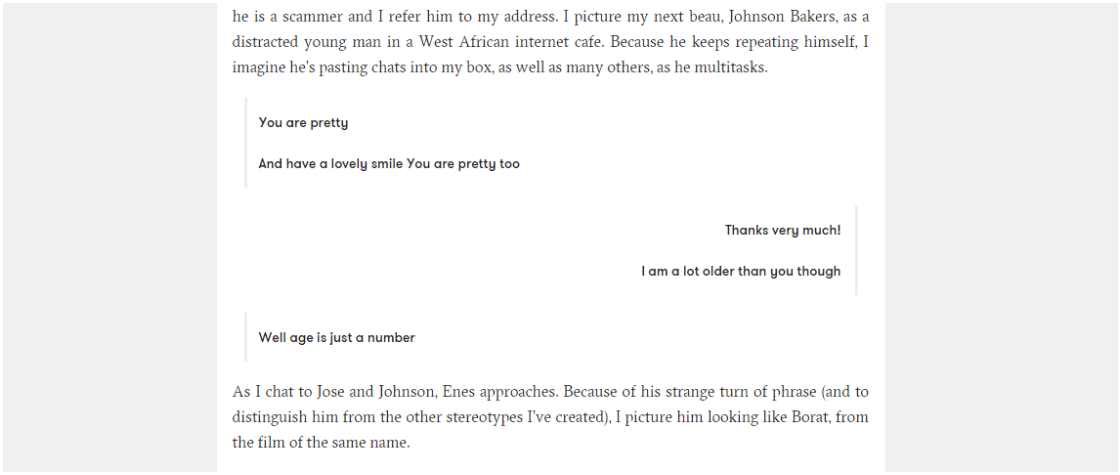


Figure 6.8: A screenshot of the online version of ‘My romances’ on *The Lifted Brow* website. Note the use of left and right justification, sans serif font, and vertical lines to indicate the flow of the conversation from person to person. (Accessed 12 October 2016)

Here, the transcription has a less formal layout, and appears to mimic the style and design of a conversation as it might appear in a chat window. The sans serif font used is typical for digital writing and many online platforms, including Facebook and Google, and the alternating left-to-right justification for different ‘speakers’ mimics a digital exchange’s on-screen image. In ‘translating’ this piece online, the editors of *The Lifted Brow* represent a less formal difference between scammers and writer, demonstrating Hayles’s ‘media translation’ at work: Online, the narrator and her interlocutors are communicating in a different language from the print version. The presence of such distancing raises questions about the relationship between online scammers and the narrator, and why distance is communicated through different means in different media. These questions can be explored by contrasting how issues of community and social justice are managed using print and digital contexts.

6.4.3 Media translation and community

Stefanovic’s extract demonstrates her apparently genuine attempts to balance her narrator’s story with the scammers’ point of view, and transcriptions of the narrator’s conversations with scammers make up nearly half the text’s content. With this in mind, the

fact that scammers are typically from developing countries (the narrator mentions Ghana and Senegal), and the narrator is an educated, middle-class Westerner who strikes up conversations under false pretences, could threaten to tip her piece from exploratory to exploitative. Indeed, in many ways, the text raises questions as to who is scamming whom: the narrator assumes a false identity herself, and has published, presumably without knowledge of consent, conversations with her 'scammers' for her own commercial gain.

The Lifted Brow is known for, and publicises, its desire to publish marginalised voices, to soften the edges between the centre and the margins, and to strive for social justice. This goal underpins the journal's affective network, its community. Cooney said in his interview,

> We do chase up, for want of a better term, people who would be considered minorities in some way. Whether it's first or second generation, migrant, writers and artists or whether it's refugees or whether it's people from you know, all kind of different queer backgrounds. Whether it's folks from different ways of upbringing or such persuasion, whatever it is we give them the space to be able to present their view to the world. (personal communication, 5 May 2015)

'My romances' appears to share *The Lifted Brow*'s approach by striving to balance Western viewpoints with those of scammers from developing countries. Examining the use of materiality in different media in this piece reveals its role in managing readers' responses to a text. In both 'translations' of this piece, material language establishes sufficient distance between the narrator and online scammers to rescue her work, in its Western privilege, from breaking with *The Lifted Brow* community's ethos.

When this language of materiality is examined, a sense of difference, rather than hierarchy, emerges. In print, the threat of Western exploitation is averted by mimicking the formalities of an interview report. Here, textual presentation merges with the symbolic capital embedded in the (doubly) printed excerpt. This allows the narrator to distance herself from the humorous spelling errors and awkward phrasing of her foreign scammers who become the subject of an investigation, rather than exploited and unwitting participants.

Where in print, transcribed extracts are defined by their pseudo-formal interview style, the online translation of 'My romances' relies on different tactics to generate a sense of distance between the narrator and the online scammers. With its chat window aesthetic and playful sans serif font, and even its paler grey font colour, the online version of this excerpt takes on a lighter tone. Furthermore, large gaps between sentences alter the reader's rhythm,

giving more time to pause, to absorb typographical errors, malapropisms, and infelicities of expression. The effect is humorous.

In establishing distance between narrator and subjects, the editors' seemingly simple formatting choices differ with varying materialities. In print, authority is favoured, while in digital, the medium's social properties are emphasised. Recalling Hayles's (2005) suggestion that analysing works in translation can expose 'presuppositions underlying reading and writing' (p. 89) can shed light on editors' judgements about value of different media. The fact that, in digital form, distance between narrator and subject is created through humour, and in print though authority, reflects the sense of value embedded in their traditions revealed in interviews. That said, this text in translation also suggests subtleties in different media that belie hierarchy. Instead, editors can be seen harnessing different material languages embedded in print and digital media to make meaning.

Alongside editors and readers, writers are important agents in the 'post-digital' literary journal ecology. While the editors (many of whom also identify as writers) often deferred to writers' preferences when discussing materiality in interviews, interrogating a text that deals expressly with digital media and literary production can test editors' statements and provide new insights into the relationship between literary journals, media, and their materiality. Schwartz's 'Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human' provides an opportunity to questions editors' statements about the economic constraints of working in online media. At the same time, it yields further evidence of editors' interventions in their journals to communicate a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print.

6.5 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WRITING FOR THE WEB: 'HUMANS PRETENDING TO BE COMPUTERS PRETENDING TO BE HUMAN'

In interviews, many editors stated that the economics of print and digital publishing differed, and that the business models for literary journals did not work online because 'you expect the internet to be free' (B. Coates, personal communication, 27 May 2015). Woodhead called this the 'hidden labour' of the internet, suggesting that the digital screen and the applications used to communicate online conceal the work that produces content (personal communication, 15 June 2015). For Woodhead, this obscures the labour throughout the chain of production, from programmers writing code, to editors, and onto writers, so that

> In society in general there is a real perception that you don't need money to operate on the internet as a writer, and so you don't need those resources and you don't need the

> staff and you don't need to pay writers as much. (personal communication, 15 June 2015)

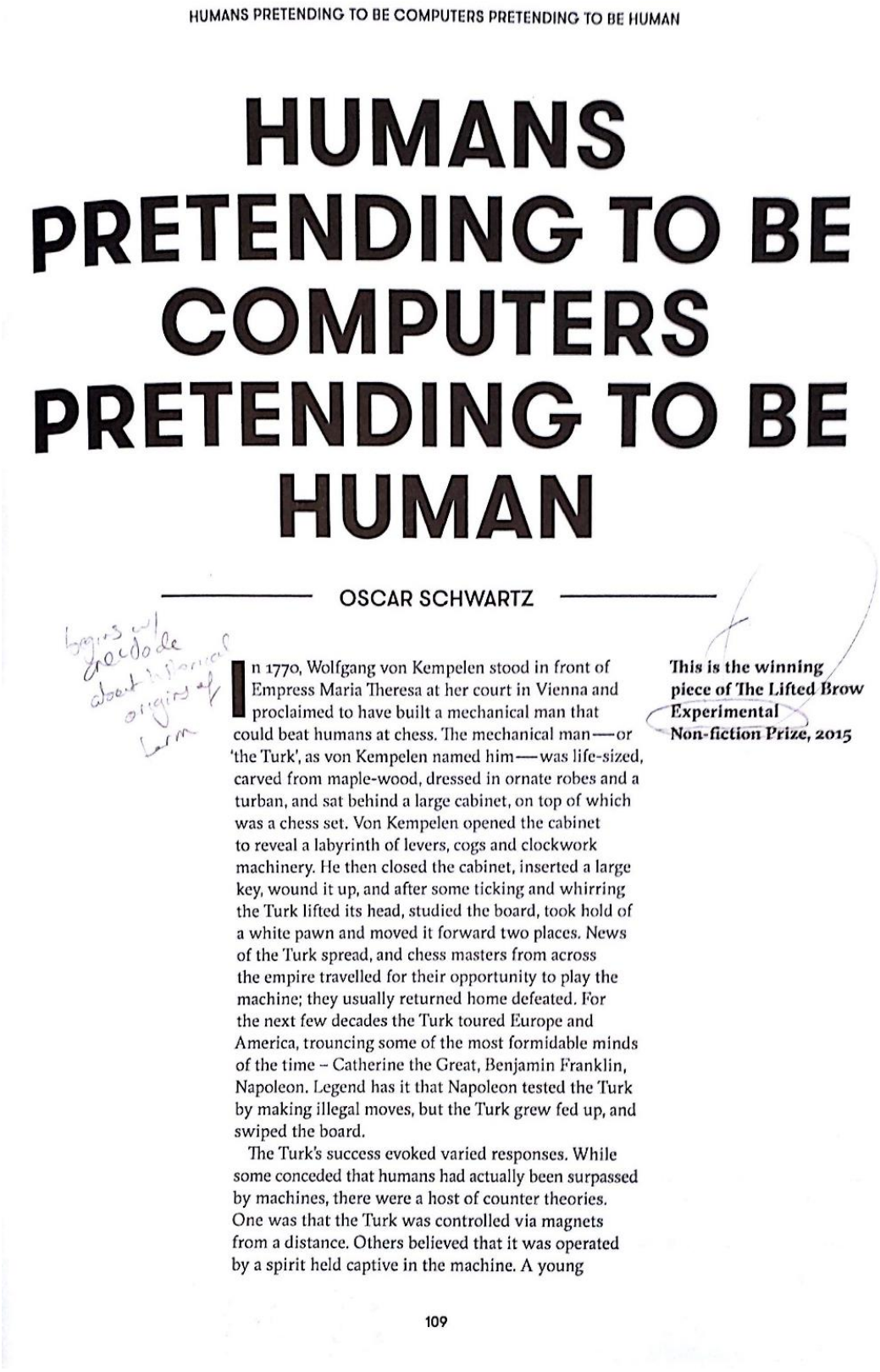
'My romances' raises some questions about how the internet might reconfigure the nature of 'work', and Schwartz's 'Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human' engages directly with the question of labour on the internet, revealing how it can be obscured and exploited, and workers marginalised by their alienation from the social world that was once so bound to work. Like 'Attribution', 'Humans pretending …' provides an opportunity to examine materiality in literary production from the point of view of the writer—in this case, both Schwartz and the team of 'Turkers' who unwittingly contribute at least 30 per cent of this prize-winning piece. Given that *The Lifted Brow* positions itself as a journal centred on a community that promotes and voices marginalised viewpoints, analysing work addressing these themes from its position in a print journal and as a decorated piece of 'experimental non-fiction' provides an opportunity to test the value of digital and print literary production from the writer's point of view. This is especially powerful in light of editors' interview statements about the *perception* that online, work has lower economic value, and that readers 'expect it to be free' (B. Coates, personal communication, 27 May 2015).

The Lifted Brow's content strategy differs from journals like *Overland* and *Meanjin*, which publish all their print content online. Instead, *The Lifted Brow* posts select print pieces on its website. In 2016, Schwartz's piece appeared on the journal's website to help promote the second iteration of the experimental non-fiction prize, having won its inaugural edition. 'Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human' is a work intended for print, a fact that, as the following analysis demonstrates, has tremendous bearing on its symbolic value, and the message it conveys about literary production. Again, this in turn demonstrates how editors' decisions regarding media reinforce a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print.

6.5.1 Symbolic capital, innovation, and print

In 2015, *The Lifted Brow* introduced a prize for 'experimental non-fiction', and Schwartz's essay was its first winner. *The Lifted Brow* describes experimental non-fiction as work that 'differs from traditional non-fiction in that it tries to convey its meaning using unorthodox form, or style, or voice, or point-of-view, or etc.' (The Lifted Brow, 2016c). Significantly, this work must 'be able to be published on the printed page' (The Lifted Brow,

2016c). In other words, the journal's editors have chosen to situate groundbreaking and experimental work in their 'flagship' print publication.



HUMANS PRETENDING TO BE COMPUTERS PRETENDING TO BE HUMAN

HUMANS PRETENDING TO BE COMPUTERS PRETENDING TO BE HUMAN

OSCAR SCHWARTZ

This is the winning piece of The Lifted Brow Experimental Non-fiction Prize, 2015

In 1770, Wolfgang von Kempelen stood in front of Empress Maria Theresa at her court in Vienna and proclaimed to have built a mechanical man that could beat humans at chess. The mechanical man—or 'the Turk', as von Kempelen named him—was life-sized, carved from maple-wood, dressed in ornate robes and a turban, and sat behind a large cabinet, on top of which was a chess set. Von Kempelen opened the cabinet to reveal a labyrinth of levers, cogs and clockwork machinery. He then closed the cabinet, inserted a large key, wound it up, and after some ticking and whirring the Turk lifted its head, studied the board, took hold of a white pawn and moved it forward two places. News of the Turk spread, and chess masters from across the empire travelled for their opportunity to play the machine; they usually returned home defeated. For the next few decades the Turk toured Europe and America, trouncing some of the most formidable minds of the time – Catherine the Great, Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon. Legend has it that Napoleon tested the Turk by making illegal moves, but the Turk grew fed up, and swiped the board.

The Turk's success evoked varied responses. While some conceded that humans had actually been surpassed by machines, there were a host of counter theories. One was that the Turk was controlled via magnets from a distance. Others believed that it was operated by a spirit held captive in the machine. A young

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Figure 6.9: Scanned image of the first page of 'Humans pretending …' by Oscar Schwartz as it appears in *The Lifted Brow* issue 25—note the announcement of the experimental non-fiction prize

In a research paper that applied Bourdieu's (1996) *Rules of art* to assess how values were changing in response to new publishing technologies in the US literary journal sphere, Paling and Nilan (2006) recognise 'positive regard for Avant-garde-ism' as a key factor in editors' judgements of literary value. The fact that *The Lifted Brow* confines this prize for experimental non-fiction (seeking avant-garde work from those who 'love to challenge themselves to create work unlike any they've previously produced' (The Lifted Brow, 2016c)) to print is a significant comment on its capacity to communicate symbolic value. The award guidelines stated that while 'we applaud the current focus and fascination with boundary-pushing non-fiction that is published online … we still believe there's scope to further experiment on the page' (The Lifted Brow, 2016c). The journal's 'applause' for the 'fascination' with online work casts an ironic shadow over faddish, techno-deterministic obsession with digital work. The effect not only positions print as a medium with ongoing potential to be enhanced and renewed, but situates it as the home of avant-garde writing, a site of higher literary and symbolic capital than its digital counterpart.

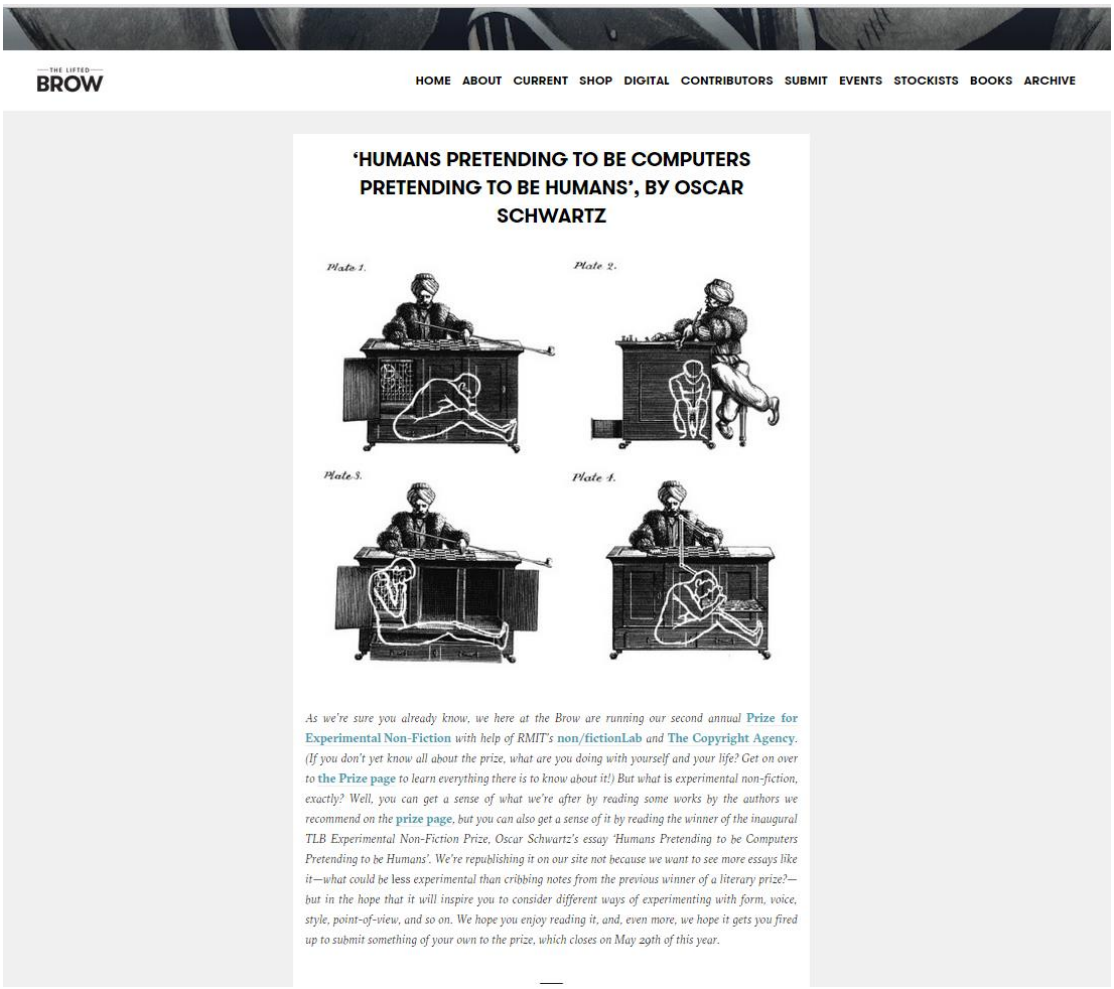

Figure 6.10: Screenshot of 'Humans pretending …' on *The Lifted Brow* website accompanied by a long paragraph promoting the work as exemplar for the experimental non-fiction prize (accessed 10 October 2016)

6.5.2 Online literary production: Literary exploitation?

Within this context of literary value and authority (its status as an award-winning work announced on its first page), 'Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human' delivers a digital cautionary tale, beginning with an anecdote about the 'mechanical turk', a hoax machine that gained notoriety in the late 1700s. It appeared to play chess against a human opponent, but was in fact operated by a person concealed within its cabinetry. With this, Schwartz announces his intention to address the 'character that always remains invisible and voiceless' in discussions about artificial intelligence: 'the humans we are willing to ignore to believe in the romance of a thinking machine' (2015, p. 110). In doing so, Schwartz turns to Amazon's 'Mechanical Turk', or mTurk,[38] an online service linking 'requesters' with a workforce of 'Turkers', 'an internationally dispersed and anonymous group of workers who

[38] www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome

sign up to mTurk and complete tasks, which usually require no specific skill or training, for small sums of money' (p. 110). Turks respond to requests called 'HITs', or 'Human Intelligence Tasks', and complete them within a given timeframe. Many Turkers are from marginalised social groups—Schwartz's narrator cites a large cohort of single mothers from the US, as well as Indian workers, who are able to 'Turk' full time thanks to the US dollar's exchange rate.

In reading a work that *The Lifted Brow* promotes as an exemplar of the new genre (or at least the newly defined genre) of 'experimental non-fiction', the reader is prompted to seek out elements that differentiate the work from traditional non-fiction writing—what makes this essay experimental? Its only distinguishing 'experimental' element is the use of personal accounts provided by 'Turks' working on Amazon's platform. Like 'My romances', which uses transcribed excerpts from conversations with online scammers (but was not promoted as experimental non-fiction), 'Humans pretending … ' includes first-person accounts from anonymous online participants, who, like Stefanovic's scammers, are nevertheless unaware of their participation in literary production. This juxtaposition of unknowing contribution (with digital origins) and prize-winning authority (with print destination) demonstrates the capacity of materiality to determine the economic value of literary work.

Each of the excerpts from Amazon's freelance workforce are provided in response to a 'HIT' posted by the narrator:

> Earlier this year I became a Requester on mTurk. The first and only HIT I made was as follows: 'Please send me a minimum 2000 word journal entry about your day. Please provide as many concrete details as possible without providing any information that would give up your identity. Please use fake names.' I set the price at $5, an expiry time of twenty-four hours, and total budget of $35, meaning that after the first seven Turkers submitted, the HIT would terminate. I filled this quota within the first four hours of posting the HIT. That evening I sat in my room and read through the private thoughts and private conversations of seven people I had never met. (Schwartz, 2015, pp. 110–111)

While true that the mTurk request yields the 'private thoughts and private conversations' (p. 110) of seven strangers, the narrator explains elsewhere that 'now, in a way, I own them' (p. 110), and the personal details of 'a dispersed and anonymous group of workers' (p. 110) (many from underprivileged backgrounds) have been incorporated into a prize-winning piece of writing for the entertainment or edification of readers from a largely

Australian, middle-class, educated audience. As the work cycles between the narrator's argument about the alienation of the digital workforce and the original words of these workers themselves, an illustration of a reverse media translation takes shape. Here, work with digital origins is 'translated' into a printed artefact. At its heart are the original 'authors'—Turkers—who report lives of lonelieness, alienation, and poverty:

> For lunch I found a chicken melt type sandwich that you put in the microwave and placed it on a paper plate. I placed it in the microwave for two minutes until it was sufficiently melted and opened the microwave door. Because my life is so boring, I then returned back to my room which also doubles as an entertainment center where I turned on my TV and started to eat the lukewarm chicken melt that I had just nuked. I'm constantly on my laptop as I do this and went to Facebook where I spend the majority of my days posting statuses about oddball things I come in contact with and sharing memes with the rest of my pack of weirdo followers. I talked online to my friend Bill for a while until around 5 o'clock about what we had been up to for most of the day. I explained, as usual, that I had done basically nothing with my day other than work and sit around relaxing. I turned on some Bob Dylan, muted the TV, and still proceeded to zone out while looking simultaneously for HiTs I could do on mTurk for a bit of extra money. This whole time the only real-life person I had come in contact with today was my mother. (Schwartz, 2015, pp. 111–112)

The irony of this work is that, in composing an award-winning piece of fiction for a middle-class audience of educated Australians, Schwartz exploits the very group his narrator purports to defend. Remembering how editors' interpretations of the value of labour on the internet forced them to shape their approaches to publishing in digital media, 'Humans pretending … ' provides an illustrative example of how the digital screen can indeed obscure some of the humanity of digital subjects, and the economic value of their work. Positioned as an award-winning work in print, 'Humans pretending … ' illustrates the economic safety of the medium with the highest symbolic capital: print.

While Stefanovic's participants (online romance scammers) were duped into writing material for her novel, Schwartz's seven contributors were indeed paid—but only five US dollars each for 2,000 words. Schwartz won $5,000 and publication in *The Lifted Brow*'s print edition for his 5,000-word essay, and the fact that 30 per cent of its words were written by Turkers—paid tiny sums to write their personal narratives—hints at a kind of authorial exploitation of digital writers that puts paid to Woodhead's statement that online, 'labour is hidden', and this leads to 'a real perception that you don't need money to operate on the

internet as a writer' (personal communication, 15 June 2015). Translated from digital to print, Turkers' words illustrate a story *about* exploitation, but in their raw, digital state, they effectively offer evidence of the rewards of exploitation itself. Having participated as unwitting co-authors, their digital labour is nothing but a component–product in a profitable print enterprise.

The question remains as to whether the narrator's meagre payments to digital writers from the 'Turker' workforce is a deliberate technique to demonstrate the ease with which literary producers can be exploited online. The narrator provides no overt clues, and the fact is largely irrelevant. Schwartz's piece demonstrates, regardless of the author's intention, the ease with which digital writers can be exploited, mirroring the 'hidden labour of the internet' alluded to in the editor interviews.

As a successful and profitable piece of print writing, 'Humans pretending …' demonstrates the very phenomenon it seeks to expose. In paying Turkers five dollars for work whose real value sits somewhere in the hundreds of dollars, the writer unearths alienation and exploitation, but also profits from it. In context of *The Lifted Brow*'s dedication to marginalised voices, the work is unsuccessful in overcoming the digital exploitation that the editors rallied against in interviews, but is (as a result) highly successful in demonstrating the economic difficulties of online publishing in the 'messy', 'post-digital' literary landscape.

The 'hierarchy of media' favouring print uncovered in interviews is reinforced by editors' decisions to pin award-winning innovation to print publication. After Bourdieu's model of the literary field, prizes and awards, as well as 'avant-garde' status, bestow symbolic capital on publications and authors. In this case, symbolic capital is also (intermediated by the presence of digital publishing) reflected onto print media itself.[39] Analysing 'Humans pretending …' takes editors' statements about the percieved low economic value of digital writing and questions them from the point of view of writers and literary producers, presenting a sobering industry that reaffirms editors' viewpoints. Entangled with *The Lifted Brow*'s editorial decisions to publish work of literary value in

[39] Paling and Nilan's (2006) study of US literary journal editors' use of print and digital technology posited four values, derived from Bourdieu, against which to judge motivations characteristic of the literary field. These values included 'positive regard for avant-gardism' 'negative regard for immediate financial gain, 'positive regard for autonomy', and 'positive regard for symbolic capital' (pp. 863–864). While the study's findings are not directly relevant to this project, the methodology reducing Bourdieu's 'rules' to a conceptual framework of four literary values highlights the importance of innovation, independence, and an anti-market stance in augmenting a title's symbolic capital, regardless of medium.

print, this essay strongly reinforces that the 'hierarchy of media' in the literary journal field can favour writers published in print more than those working for the screen.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of literary journal texts has broadened this project's scope beyond the words of the interviewed editors to explore the interrelated ecosystem of editors, reader, and writers that embodies Australian literary journals. Bourdieu states that understanding the value of in literary production 'is a question of understanding works of art as a *manifestation* of the field as a whole, in which all the powers of the field, and all the determinisms inherent in its structure and functioning, are concentrated' (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 37). This chapter has analysed literary journal texts as manifestations of the field as a whole, interrogating texts' material qualities for evidence of a 'hierarchy of media' in the Australian literary journal, and testing statements from interviews with those journals' editors.

In examining texts from *Overland* and *The Lifted Brow*, this chapter has confirmed that the choices made by literary journal editors shape the value of different media in the field. This chapter has also uncovered variations in meaning and communication when works are translated between media, and argues that rather than a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print described by many editors in their interviews, *reading* in print and digital might be reframed as nuanced and different, with each media speaking different languages through their materiality. Nevertheless, the economic realities of *writing* for digital media remain determining factors in the way online publishing is valued, and a part of editors' ongoing negotiations through the 'messy' mingling of media in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Discussion

7.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This thesis has investigated debates about materiality and media in Australian literary journals that developed during the last decade. In doing so, it has examined the relationships between literary journals' functions, value, and materiality. Literary journals in Australia have often been absent from studies of the Australian publishing industry, and increased emphasis on the role of media's contextual information in making meaning calls for re-examining publishing practices. Responding to these gaps in our knowledge of the field, this study has addressed two research questions: what role does materiality play in the literary journal field, and how do editors use different media to achieve their goals?

In response to these questions, this study finds that the material qualities of print are deployed by editors to communicate literary value, power, and a sense of community, all of which play a role in securing the longevity or survival of their publications. It argues that print has a dominant position in a 'hierarchy of media' in the literary journal field, and that this hierarchy is based on economic, cultural, and material factors, all of which have bearing on editors' choices between print and digital media. This project has uncovered that some of the value situated in print's materiality is vested through the 'intermediation' (where one medium comments on, and influences another) at work between digital and print media. In this way, the study suggests that the rise of digital publishing has accentuated the haptic qualities and symbolic value of its print counterpart.

In spite of these emerging practices and values identified in the study, digital publishing methods are nevertheless vital tools for literary journals to distribute writers' work, connect with readers, and share content that is less bound by publication schedules and distribution infrastructure. Furthermore, *differences* between media and their material languages emerge to eclipse the 'hierarchy of media' favouring print. This research indicates, therefore, that assessments of the value of different media are more likely to be perpetuated by editors than their readers, and that these assessments of value often overlook digital publishing's capacity to communicate effectively and affectively, but in a distinct material language. This new knowledge diverts discussion from binaries of old versus new, tradition versus innovation,

print versus digital, and opens new avenues for academic inquiry into literary publishing, arts policy, and industry practice.

Investigating the role media plays in the 'post-digital' publishing landscape calls for research design that reaches beyond the 'print versus digital' dichotomy that has characterised debate in the literary journal field. With a theoretical framework drawn from the sociology of literature, borrowing much from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, the study redeploys classic sociological theory from 'traditional' print practices in the contemporary media landscape. This innovative application provides a model framework for future research into the 'post-digital' publishing ecology.

The methodology combines robust methods that, while common in cultural studies and sociological disciplines, innovatively entwine to investigate data that is at once cultural, economic, technological, and contextual. The research methods are foregrounded by a contextual review that formulates a new map of the literary journal field in the present day. The contextual review also contributes a new study of the economic, cultural, and technological factors that converged at the turn of the millennium to propel the field towards change, including the rise of the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy'. This mode of exploration is uniquely suited to articulating the novel, material strategies deployed by literary journal editors seeking to influence reading modes and approaches to their texts, particularly in this emerging, 'technoconsumerist' literary market.

The methods chosen for this project—semi-structured interviews and textual analysis—interweave to gather complementary data about the motivations behind editors' strategies, the ways they use media to execute them, and their effects on readers and writers within this landscape. Interviews and textual analysis reveal that literary value and the language of cultural capital are embodied in the media that communicates—and forms part of—a text. While superficially surprising, this research project's major finding of a 'hierarchy of media' favouring print in literary journals in Australia is grounded in notions of value that are deeply ingrained in the habitus of the field. This finding is articulated through the application of a methodology uniquely suited to the complexity of economics and culture, tradition and power, that affects literary editors' use of media.

This study also finds that, increasingly, writers are replacing readers as the key 'market' for literary journals in Australia. Beyond materiality and media use, issues surrounding literary journals' popularity and access to institutional funding support will continue to shape

the field. Funding, and the changing readership of literary journals (from readers to writers), are rich sources of friction and wield hefty influence over the material choices editors make in their use of media. The study identifies developments in readerships that are likely to have lasting and far-reaching consequences for literary journals' viability and character.

For a period of several years in the early 2000s, print's 'inevitable' replacement by electronic publishing was a common theme in media coverage and popular discussions of the publishing industry. In truth, a much more complex adjustment has taken place, and this study finds that the contemporary field could be said to embody a 'post-digital' publishing ecology characterised by mingling technologies and ongoing change. This is an iterative process—the constant intermediation between different media leaves their mark on others, and will continue in flux. While this thesis examines the role of materiality in choices about media in a very small field in the Australian literary sphere, its original contributions bear implications for broader applicability wherever materiality and symbolic value brush against new technologies in the 'messy', 'post-digital' publishing landscape. This chapter now turns to discuss these implications, explore emerging questions, and make recommendations for further study.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS AND EMERGING QUESTIONS

7.2.1 Economic constraints

While technological and cultural developments have contributed to changes in the role materiality plays in the literary journal field in recent years, this project finds that the economic challenges literary journals face have tremendous influence, too. These findings have significance for policy direction and funding decisions in the Australian literary field. The research indicates that literary journal editors have experimented with online distribution and other means of broadcasting their work, such as live events, but no viable alternative to print publication has yet emerged. At the same time, literary journals published in print rely on a traditional subscription business model that depends on a market of exchange based on commodity fetishism. In other words, subscribers preferred to receive tangible goods in return for their money, but hesitate to pay for their digital equivalent. People, explained one editor, 'expect the internet to be free' (B. Coates, personal communication, 27 May 2015). This is significant because it prompts reinvestment, both cultural and economic, in the print medium, increasing the symbolic power of print's material properties and reinforcing editors' desire to direct time and funds to that medium.

With no feasible economic alternative to print publishing, and with print sales rarely recovering literary journals' expenses, these publications remain reliant on funding, which has ramifications for editors' media use. With implications for future directions of funding bodies and supporting institutions such as universities, this research finds that print readerships of 1,000 to 2,000 reap inadequate revenue to make independence a realistic goal. The result is a default to the print business model, favoured for its economic safety and capacity to signify economic value, relative to digital publishing models. Again, this investment in the print medium serves to reinforce the cultural and symbolic value embedded in its materiality, augmenting its role in communicating literary value, but directing energy away from digital publishing and its possibilities.

Despite the fact that interview questions focused on media, materiality, and literary value, editors chose to discuss funding in great detail. This research, therefore, contributes original insights into editors' fraught attitudes towards institutional support. The vast majority of Australian literary journals are dependent on some form of funding, but also resent their dependence. This project's limited scope opens opportunities for more detailed explorations of funding issues in Australian literature, further discussed in this chapter's limitations and recommendations section, below.

Print, funding, and editorial energy

This study has demonstrated findings on funding and materiality that have implications for policy and practice in the literary journal field. Interviews with literary journal editors suggest that publishing a print journal is more likely to satisfy potential and existing funding bodies, and some grants specify that funds be spent on production and contributors' costs, effectively limiting the money and time literary journal editors could invest in online platforms, and indirectly favouring the print business model. Editors expressed some frustration at the apparently arbitrary and frequently shifting parameters of funding guidelines that, again, direct energy away from experimentation and innovation and into the safety of traditional business and cultural models, such as print.

In addition to these findings, policymakers need also take note of what one editor called the 'hidden labour' of the internet. This research finds that some of the cultural and economic investment in print, reflected in its materiality, comes about as a result of a general unwillingness to pay for digital content. This unwillingness is evident in both production (in writers' pay and funding distribution) and consumption (in the difficulty of selling subscriptions to digital journals). Two of the web-only journals participating in this project

gave away all their content for free and relied solely on funding grants to survive, while the other, the *Review of Australian Fiction*, was run on volunteer labour and at risk of folding (I. Indyk, personal communication, 11 June 2015; M. Lamb, 5 April 2016; K. MacCarter, 2015, 18 June 2015). While the study finds that this drives editors to invest in their print publications and exaggerate print's material qualities, future decisions about funding online journals need consider the relative inability of online publications to generate revenue.

Shadow economy, readers, and writers

The fact that literary journals are unable to support themselves through subscription sales belies their (paradoxical) popularity. This research contributes new insights into journals' emerging challenge of converting writers who submit work into readers who pay for subscriptions. The interviewed editors often repeated the maxim that if every writer submitting to their publication were to take out a subscription, they would never have to fill out a grant application again. This study finds that, to a large degree, this emerging cohort of writer–stakeholders in literary journals came about with the rise of the creative writing industry's 'shadow economy', a trend with implications for future policy and industry practices in the Australian literary field.

Above all, perhaps, these trends raise questions about the relative importance of writers and readers to Australian literary journals that are likely to shape these publications' futures. While editors argued that their journals existed to reach readers, their media strategies, often wed to print, belied this claim, and revealed a hidden dialogic of value in the field. The study suggests that this dialogic of value favours writers, who (like editors) profit from the symbolic capital flowing through the printed object. In suggesting that writers constitute perhaps the most important stakeholder group in literary journal communities, this research contributes new knowledge that has significant bearing on the strategic planning of journals and arts policymakers.

7.2.2 Material language

Objectification

Literary journal editors' economic and practical concerns are not sufficient to explain the many choices of one medium over another uncovered in this research, and that this thesis proposes indicates an unspoken value embedded in print's materiality. The interviews uncovered, for example, that editors of online-only publications who participated in this project either expressed a desire to work in print or had developed subsidiary print

publications. The research identifies design trends that emphasise print's haptic and visual qualities, such as producing beautifully designed 'artefacts' in full colour, or using quality paper stock. This project extends the theoretical application of Benjamin's concept of 'aura', transposing it to the analogue work in the digital age. This application illuminates how a rise in print fetishism draws attention to the differences between print and digital work, so that a text's embodiment and material *context* are increasingly rich sources of meaning in the 'post-digital' publishing ecology. This finding contributes to the theoretical understanding of material literacy, which has applications in the publishing industry and creative industries more broadly.

Media hierarchy

Intermediation of this kind, therefore, gives rise to new material literacies. This research uncovers that editors, drawing from personal experience, feel that print reading generates a different reading experience from its digital counterpart and, significantly, that this experience is superior, particularly for reading fiction (as opposed to non-fiction content such as essays or reviews). This reinforces the finding of a 'hierarchy of media' in the field. The study demonstrates that many literary journal editors regard digital reading as distracted—by email, social media, and search boxes—while print reading creates a 'bubble' (S. Cooney, personal communication, 5 May 2015) for the 'deep reading required to truly appreciate fiction' (R. Skinner, personal communication, 23 March 2016)—a contained, if idealised—reading experience.

At the same time, other findings demonstrate that the complexity of the relationships literary journal communities have with different media must be taken into account in any assessment of hierarchy. Interview data reveals, for example, that digital publication still holds its own attractions, including its freedom and flexibility, its atemporality, and its capacity for cross-referencing—a reminder that literary journal editors, in many cases, view their media choices not in terms of 'either/or', but in terms of 'what fits where' (even if their assessments are guided by cultural and symbolic values, rather than aesthetic pragmatism).

Although limited by this project's scope, further research implications emerge where materiality is interrogated from the reader's perspective. Here, it appears that media might be regarded according to *differences* in material language and capabilities, rather than *hierarchies* organised by symbolic or literary value. This finding is further explored in 'limitations and recommendations', below.

7.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The timeframe and resources allocated to this project naturally limit its scope to a precise field in the Australian publishing landscape, understood through a workable methodology, and from the perspectives of a small number of agents. In contributing to a better understanding of material aspects of the complex 'post-digital' publishing ecology, a number of questions have emerged with an urgency and intensity that calls for further investigation.

7.3.1 Funding

This study focused on media and materiality, but questions of funding frequently surfaced in interviews. While this project's scope was limited to questions regarding print and digital media, and literary value, taking into account economic context, its modest scope denied the possibility of further exploring questions of funding. These questions are fundamental to the Australian independent publishing and literary landscape, and require in-depth consideration, particularly due to recent changes in Australia Council funding policies, and the frequent shifts in government arts policy over recent years.

One of editors' chief difficulties is operating under the ever-present threat of defunding, which can be sudden and unexpected. In 2016, for example, two major Australian literary journals—*Meanjin* and *Island*—lost Australia Council support, and their future is uncertain: the publications must devote significant resources to finding alternatives, or the journal folds. Some guarantee of adequate funding, and some assurance of its tenure, would offer them the security they need to thrive.

The problem of obtaining adequate subsidy is not new. Writing in 1995, Bev Roberts (1995) criticised the Australia Council funding models for literary journals, which, she said, seemed to be designed around the concept of 'providing palliative care for the chronically ill' (p. 187). In his interview in 2015, Geoff Lemon echoed Roberts' metaphor, saying: 'it's sort of like a life support thing of like, we're just going to keep you alive but we're not going to bring you out of the coma, you know? It'd cost too much to actually get you walking again' (personal communication, 5 June 2015). During the course of this thesis, 50 per cent of the editors who took part in interviews have stepped down from their roles, and turnover in more junior roles is much higher. In his interview, Lemon said during his five years as editor of *Going Down Swinging*, he might have been paid 'a few thousand dollars', and that voluntary hours from staff probably amounted to a few hundred thousand dollars of unpaid labour a

year (personal communication, 5 June 2015). Most literary journal editors work for free or for very low pay (except those at journals hosted by universities, who earn academic wages). This limits the amount of time and energy they can devote to their journals. Many grants stipulate that the money be spent on production expenses or writers' pay, leaving editors woefully deprived, working full-time jobs and editing in their spare time, unable to expand their journals, explore the possibilities of different media, or satisfactorily engage with readers and writers—and literary journals are poorer for this.

How to divide limited government funds among a competitive clutch of 17 or so journals is a difficult problem. In her 1995 piece, Roberts made the bold and unpopular suggestion that the 'life support' be cut off in order to reduce the number of journals relying on institutional support, even under risk of losing some. This study suggests that there is some sense in this bold proposal. Some journals perform similar functions and reach a limited pool of readers, with overlap in their approach and editorial choices. Surprisingly, the interviewed editors agreed at times. Even editors of journals with considerable longevity questioned the assumption that funding should continue simply because it would be too controversial to let established journals go, with *Meanjin* frequently singled out as a publication in terminal decline.

Ephemerality has traditionally been an important component of literary magazines' urgency and dynamism, and as Ivor Indyk said: 'the best ones come and go' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). Further research with vigorous interpretation-resultant data might suggest that generous one-off grants to a limited number of journals enables them to establish sustainable readerships and business models, launching a few to independence and bolstering the health of the field. At the same time, diverting funds away from traditional models (many of which stipulate that money be spent paying writers, leaving little for day-to-day expenses) and into broader programs aimed at building publications' capacity and diversifying editors' skills could help journals develop viable business models that guarantee some revenue, independent of funding.

Collecting quantitative data on literary journals' circulation, costs, website page views, subscription figures, and budgets has been beyond the scope of this project. While such figures are quite frequently gathered by funding bodies such as the Australia Council in grant acquittals and applications, there is little evidence that the data is synthesised or analysed to form a complete picture of the field's economic status and to make predictions for the future. Literary journal editors' time and money, as well as expertise in marketing, e-commerce, and

promotion, are limited. Astute cross-disciplinary partnerships between academic researchers and government arts agencies such as the Australia Council could unite literary journal editors with leading-edge practices in online business models and marketing methods. Such partnerships could focus on harnessing possibilities offered by e-commerce and its intersections with the physical world (such as multichannel marketing), and help untangle (or unite) economic viability and literary value. Opportunities exist for commercial research partnerships between academia and funding bodies to synthesise and interpret data to map the economic condition of the field, connect editors with resources and training, and inform future decisions.

7.3.2 Readerships

Given the complexity of this relationship between readers and writers in the literary journal community (this research uncovered, for example, that as many as 80 per cent of *Overland* readers identify as writers), and its effect on fraught questions of media choice, much insight could be gained from survey of literary journal subscribers across all of Australia's publications, interrogating the reasons people read, visit websites, and subscribe to literary journals, and their preferences for different media. The percentage of readers identifying as writers across this broader sample would confirm whether *Overland*'s statistic holds true and thus help respond to the question of whom literary journals exist to serve, and how better to serve them in different media.

Many editors interviewed for this project also identified as writers, and many of their material choices were informed by suppositions about the needs of the writers appearing in their publications. The question remains as to what readers want from literary journals, the medium they prefer to read in, and what they are willing to pay for. This gap in our knowledge of literary journals presents another opportunity for a commercial research partnership between academia and arts funding bodies to investigate Australian literary journal readerships. Qualitative data on readership preferences could help editors make informed decisions about media choice to suit readers' needs. There is a genuine prospect that literary journal readers prefer to read online, and while a viable digital business model for literary journals remains elusive, the frequency, size, distribution methods, and contents of print journals could be re-evaluated in light of such data to yield potential economic benefit.

7.3.3 Exclusivity

The evident cultural roots of the 'hierarchy of media' raises questions about the rarefied and exclusive nature of literary journals. This study proposes that, true to Bourdieu's (1996) writing on cultural production, many literary journal editors locate symbolic and literary value in the anti-market positioning of their journals. This in turn suggests that literary journal editors could be regarded as unconsciously invested in the economic failure of their publications because popularity is aligned with popular culture, and antithetical to the 'literary' ideal.

Furthermore, this thesis argues that part of the value editors invest in print objects lies in their journals' physical circulation as symbols of editors' achievement. The fact that the dominant discourse in the field defers to the superiority of print exposes editors' hegemonic power, which has implications for understandings of Australian literary culture in both research and practice. Literary journal editors' investment in their journals as symbols of cultural value and power, the rarefied nature of these journals, and their economic difficulties indicate that problems of funding and readerships discussed in interviews obscure a more pressing question of the viability of literary journals in contemporary literary markets. This, in turn, raises the question of how to fund, manage, and plan for publications that are culturally valuable, but economically unviable, even *within* their own field.

In his interview, Indyk suggested that Australian literary journals exist in a realm of 'virtual reality', in that the literary field can agree that their brand of literary writing is a good thing, a necessary thing, but few people are interested in reading it: 'everybody thinks it's really important, and hardly anybody reads it. So where does it exist? You know, what kind of reality does it have? I can't answer that question' (personal communication, 11 June 2015). While Indyk suggested that digital publication presented an opportunity to reclaim some of the defining characteristics of Australian literary journals, their material future seems more likely bound up in the 'messy' negotiations between media, economics, culture, and politics identified in this study, and that characterise the contemporary 'post-digital' publishing ecology.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview questions

Do you have a sense that your journal belongs to and carries on any particular tradition?

1: What do you aim to achieve with your literary journal?

2: Why is it important that a literary journal appears in print? What does print do that online publication can't? Is it important for editors?

3: How do you decide/are there other considerations what to publish online, what in print? How do the two differ and how do they work together?

4: Do you think online writing has a different audience, or suits different writers or genres or readers?

5: LJs often say community is really important for them. How do live events, print, and online content contribute to a sense of community?

6: What are the most difficult and most rewarding aspects of editing a literary journal?

7: Do you think a journal's medium has an effect on its ability to attract funding?

8: What is the future for your journal [in terms of publication place]? Literary journals in general?

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix B

Texts for textual analysis

Texts reproduced here are scanned copies of print material, or online material converted to Portable Document Format. They are provided not only as textual references, but contextual resources. As such, texts that were analysed in both print and digital forms are reproduced twice to provide information on their context in both media.

‘Reading machines’, Webb, 2016, *Overland*, print

‘Attribution’, Gamieldien, 2016, *Overland*, digital

‘My romances’, Stefanovic, 2016, *The Lifted Brow*, print

‘Humans pretending to be computers pretending to be human’, Schwartz, 2015, *The Lifted Brow*, print